

**SAMUEL I. "SANDY" ROSENBERG**  
*Legislative District 41*  
Baltimore City

Health and Government Operations  
Committee

*Chair*

Government Operations and Estates  
and Trusts Subcommittee

*House Chair*

Joint Committee on Administrative,  
Executive, and Legislative Review



THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

RESPOND TO OFFICE INDICATED

☐ *Annapolis Office*  
The Maryland House of Delegates  
6 Bladen Street, Room 365  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401  
410-841-3297 · 301-858-3297  
800-492-7122 Ext. 3297  
Samuel.Rosenberg@house.state.md.us

☐ *District Office*  
4811 Liberty Heights Avenue  
Baltimore, Maryland 21207  
410-664-2646

Testimony of Delegate Samuel I. Rosenberg  
Before the House Appropriations Committee In Support Of  
**House Bill 1419**  
**Correctional Services- Division of Parole and Probation**

Madam Chair and Members of the Committee:

*"The Baltimore Police Department reported that 30.5% of murder victims and 26.7% of arrested murder suspects were under the supervision of the state's Department of Parole and Probation. In other words, these victims and perpetrators were arrested by police and convicted by prosecutors and the courts. And then the state failed to keep track of them to keep them from killing or being killed. As violent crime has increased, the number of parole and probation agents has decreased."*<sup>1</sup>

Each loss of life to violence is a tragedy on its own. Yet more tragic, however, is the reality that many of these deaths could have been prevented with better implementation of programs already in place. Our parole and probation system as it currently exists is failing parolees and the residents of Maryland. The Division of Parole and Probation currently has an 11% vacancy rate.

The *Baltimore Sun* reported in a recent editorial that "one-third of victims and suspects in city shootings are under state supervision. . . . If those individuals are better monitored . . . they are less likely to get into trouble. Experts think it might lower the homicide rate in a matter of months, if not weeks. Police investigate crime, but parole agents might actually be better positioned to prevent it."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Baltimore Sun Op Ed, Patrick Moran, *Maryland governor is running an inept state government*, Feb.24,2020.

<sup>2</sup> Baltimore Sun Editorial Board, "Is Annapolis ready to provide Baltimore the help it needs? | COMMENTARY"  
Jan. 10, 2020.

The Pew Charitable Trusts reports that, nationally, roughly 40 percent of people released from prison to a community supervision program return within three years.<sup>3</sup> Maryland's statistics tell the same story: Almost one third of all prison admissions in Maryland are individuals returning to prison from parole.<sup>4</sup> The sobering data indicate that our system of parole and probation inadequately supports those recently released from incarceration for life outside of prison.

By bolstering Maryland's parole and probation programs, Maryland will benefit doubly: first, from avoiding the steep costs of incarceration and second, from the reclaimed potential of contributions to the local economy and community. Instead of presenting an additional burden on the state, properly supported parolees can serve as mentors to reduce recidivism rates and violence, such as by volunteering for organizations like Safe Streets Baltimore.<sup>5</sup>

Ensuring the successful reintroduction of parolees to life outside of incarceration requires support from parole agents and probation supervision agents. A study by the Justice Policy Institute found that "[u]nemployment, finding housing and the need for jobs skills were ranked as key issues for clients."<sup>6</sup> Structural barriers to employment, such as mandatory reporting of criminal history, have been mitigated with recently enacted legislation, such as the "Ban the box bill" of 2019.<sup>7</sup> Recidivism due to technical violations of parole or probation has been mitigated by the Justice Reinvestment Act.<sup>8</sup>

The remaining causes of recidivism – finding employment, housing, and general support – may be best mitigated with the assistance of attention from parole and probation supervision agents. The Justice Policy Institute reported that parolees who received help from community supervision agents were more likely to have a full-time job.<sup>9</sup> However, community supervision agents indicated structural barriers to providing the assistance identified as essential to parolee success.

Among the most significant limitations on supervision is an untenable workload imposed upon supervision agents. While research has shown that the community supervision model, which provides greater support through individually tailored assistance, is far more likely to reduce parolees' return to prison, supervision agents have insufficient time to provide that assistance to each of their assigned individuals. In the JPI report, agents indicated that excessive caseload size

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<sup>3</sup> *Justice Policy Institute*, "Parole Perspectives in Maryland: A Survey of People Who Returned to Prison from Parole and Community Supervision Agents," at 2; Accessed through Abell Foundation online, <http://www.abell.org/sites/default/files/publications/cj-parole515.pdf> (citing Pew Center on the States, *State of Recidivism: The Revolving Door of America's Prisons* (Washington, DC: The Pew Charitable Trusts, April 2011)).

<sup>4</sup> *Id.*

<sup>5</sup> *See, e.g.*, "Safe Streets" Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, Center for Prevention of Youth Violence. [https://www.jhsph.edu/research/centers-and-institutes/center-for-prevention-of-youth-violence/field\\_reports/Safe\\_Streets.html](https://www.jhsph.edu/research/centers-and-institutes/center-for-prevention-of-youth-violence/field_reports/Safe_Streets.html) (last viewed Feb. 4, 2020).

<sup>6</sup> *Supra* note 1 at 3.

<sup>7</sup> Luke Broadwater and Pamela Wood, "Maryland General Assembly overrides Gov. Hogan vetoes of 5 bills, including 'ban the box' legislation," *The Baltimore Sun*, Jan 30, 2020.

<sup>8</sup> *See, e.g.*, "Justice Reinvestment" MARYLAND ALLIANCE FOR JUSTICE REFORM, Accessed online at <https://www.ma4jr.org/justice-reinvestment/>.

<sup>9</sup> *Supra* note 2 at 3.

made it difficult for agents to develop relationships and provide high-quality support.<sup>10</sup> In particular, providing essential resources for high-need clients detracted from the agents' support of their other clients.

House Bill 1419 addresses the needs of our parole and probation agents by stating the intent of the legislature that agents' workloads should not exceed 30 high level supervision cases. Furthermore, it opens the door for a more comprehensive solution by requiring the Division of Parole and Probation to submit a report by the end of the year on steps it can take to more effectively implement community supervision in parole and probation.

The effects of greater supervision could be enormous. If up to one-third of homicide victims and suspects are under supervision, each of those individuals could be part of a domino effect to keep our streets safe.<sup>11</sup>

By limiting the workload of community supervision agents, the agents will be able to provide the support critical to their successful reintroduction in society. Supporting the work of parole and probation agents is an investment sure to return benefits far beyond the immediate impact of lower recidivism rates.

I urge the committee to give a favorable report to House Bill 1419.

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<sup>10</sup> *Id.* at 13.

<sup>11</sup> *See supra* note 1 and accompanying text.

# Maryland governor is running an inept state government | COMMENTARY

 [baltimoresun.com/opinion/op-ed/bs-ed-op-0224-hogan-inept-state-government-commentary-20200224-shpdrhpskna45fkvv3jlsmdnu-story.html](https://www.baltimoresun.com/opinion/op-ed/bs-ed-op-0224-hogan-inept-state-government-commentary-20200224-shpdrhpskna45fkvv3jlsmdnu-story.html)

By Patrick Moran

This month, The Baltimore Sun reported that Maryland is warehousing dozens of foster children in psychiatric and medical hospitals for months on end — although they are not mentally ill or injured or sick. The Maryland Department of Human Services is just incapable of figuring out where to place the vulnerable juveniles in its care.

This demonstration of incompetence is just one example of the staggering ineptitude displayed daily across Maryland's government. After five years of Gov. Larry Hogan's mismanagement and indifference, our state government is falling apart.

A review of what has been uncovered in the just the past few weeks tells the story:

1. A \$750,000 grant to purchase a country club approved by Governor Hogan's Opioid Operational Command Center was referred to the Attorney General's Office for a criminal investigation. Legislative auditors also found that 96% of a grant issued to an out-of-state nonprofit was transferred to a private company owned by the nonprofit's management.
2. Doctors who provide mental health and addiction services have not been paid millions of dollars they are owed because a state Medicaid payment system is malfunctioning. This bungling has affected about 2,500 doctors, hospitals, clinics and other facilities in Maryland.
3. The state Department of Corrections and Public Safety spent \$129 million on overtime last year, because agency leaders have allowed 20% of jobs to go unfilled. Overtime spending has more than tripled in six years. Our often violent prisons, which are charged with rehabilitating incarcerated citizens to reenter society, are about 1,000 employees short staffed.
4. Maryland's well-regarded chief medical examiner quit due to a crisis caused by understaffing and a crushing caseload driven by rising violent crime and opioid overdoses. The agency is at risk of losing its accreditation because of the staffing shortage and a leaky roof at its headquarters.
5. With billions of federal dollars at stake, census preparations lag far behind as the April 1 count approaches. A director with no prior census experience was hired in late January — only following press inquiries about the job vacancy. Advertising has not begun, with contracts not yet finalized. And grants to local governments to boost response rates have not been distributed.

6. And the Baltimore Police Department reported that 30.5% of murder victims and 26.7% of arrested murder suspects were under the supervision of the state's Department of Parole and Probation. In other words, these victims and perpetrators were arrested by police and convicted by prosecutors and the courts. And then the state failed to keep track of them to keep them from killing or being killed. As violent crime has increased, the number of parole and probation agents has decreased.

The sad thing about the crisis of incompetence is that there are many good people giving their all throughout our state government. But they aren't in top decision-making roles. This deterioration of Maryland's government is occurring through neglect and inattention, not through any discernible plan. Perhaps Governor Hogan is distracted by the need to improve transportation for his real estate projects.

This lack of accountability is unlikely to improve. Unlike his predecessors, Governor Hogan does not take responsibility for fixing the growing number of problems that are becoming apparent the longer he serves in office. But the sheer volume of evidence pointing toward mismanagement continues to pile up.

In the five years prior to Governor Hogan taking office, the state of Maryland averaged 389 homicides per year. In the five years since he took office, Maryland has averaged more than 532 murders — a 37% increase.

In his 2020 State of the State address, Governor Hogan rightfully called violent crime in Baltimore an "urgent crisis." But Governor Hogan has not mentioned how he intends to staff up the Department of Corrections and Public Safety or the Department of Juvenile Services — which is the primary way the state can help reduce violence. Nor has he put forth a plan for increasing staffing, interagency coordination or compliance at Parole and Probation, which interacts every day with violent offenders and could help prevent murders.

This month, the Hogan administration's ineptness became a national embarrassment, as National Public Radio broadcast the sad story of Maryland's needlessly hospitalized foster children. However, that story is yet another indication that the media and the Maryland General Assembly are increasingly paying attention to the cost of Governor Hogan's incompetence. The taxpayers and citizens of our state should hope that, over the remainder of his term, they continue to combine to hold him accountable.

*Patrick Moran (pmoran@afscmemd.org) is President of AFSCME Maryland.*

# Is Annapolis ready to provide Baltimore the help it needs? | COMMENTARY

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 [baltimoresun.com/opinion/editorial/bs-ed-0113-assembly-baltimore-burning-20200110-5fd7qy33yzhzhao2tlj4ec74a4-story.html](https://www.baltimoresun.com/opinion/editorial/bs-ed-0113-assembly-baltimore-burning-20200110-5fd7qy33yzhzhao2tlj4ec74a4-story.html)

By Baltimore Sun Editorial Board

On Thursday, former Senate President Thomas V. “Mike” Miller rose from the floor to give a “Rome is burning” speech in which he acknowledged Baltimore is “crying out for help” and that lawmakers ought to make the city the focus of their attention. This was surprising on at least two levels. First, it’s never been clear that the Southern Maryland lawmaker has ever been especially attuned to Baltimore during his historic 33 years leading the chamber, while his successor, Sen. Bill Ferguson, actually represents the city. The second is that, well, it’s about time.

Whatever conflagration Baltimore faces now, it’s been raging for years. Murders, low-performing schools, loss of jobs and private investment, racial discrimination, concentrated poverty, police brutality, political corruption, drug addiction and overdose deaths, these are not new cords of firewood heaped on the flames. Even the Freddie Gray unrest was nearly five years ago.

If Senator Miller is serious about addressing Baltimore’s needs — along with the lawmakers who gave his speech bipartisan applause — there are any number of things the General Assembly and Gov. Larry Hogan could do to help.

Step one would be to listen to Baltimore’s elected representatives and citizens. Certain individuals in the State House delight in disrespecting city residents. This may play well with conservative white GOP voters, but it’s poisonous to any effort to find common ground. Nobody in Annapolis has clean hands when it comes to Baltimore’s problems including the current governor.

Next, stop hurting Baltimore. That means resolving the State Center lawsuit that has deprived the city of \$1.5 billion in investment. How many thousands of jobs have been lost by this standoff that dates to the Robert L. Ehrlich Jr. administration? Stop starving the city of state transportation aid that’s been diverted to the Washington area (Interstate 270 and the American Legion Bridge representing just the latest examples). Halting the \$2.9 billion Red Line was bad enough, but has anyone noticed how dysfunctional city transit remains? It may be time to take the Mass Transit Administration out of state control and set it up as a regional transit authority with its own funding stream. The city needs jobs, but it also needs to offer the means for people to get to them.

Pass a Kirwan education reform mandate. Breaking the cycle of poverty means preparing the next generation for a more productive future. And while they are at it, lawmakers will need to help Baltimore pay its share of that school funding, too. It’s just not realistic to think city taxpayers can come up with hundreds of millions of dollars more as the Kirwan Commission education aid formula

currently contemplates. Lawmakers who object to providing greater aid to the city need to be reminded of what decades of segregation and other forms of discriminatory behavior have wrought. The bill for this enormous malfeasance has simply come due.

Be smarter about law enforcement. It isn't just that Baltimore needs more police on the street, the state needs to put more parole and probation agents out there, too. One-third of victims and suspects in city shootings are under state supervision. Get it? If those individuals are better monitored by parole and probation (if caseloads weren't so enormous), they are less likely to get into trouble. Experts think it might lower the homicide rate in a matter of months, if not weeks. Police investigate crime, but parole agents might actually be better positioned to prevent it.

Finally, provide help with the relatively small things, too. The city's problems aren't just about crime, which is as much a symptom as a cause of its broader problems. The state could fully fund BMore for Healthy Babies (the city's effort to reduce infant mortality), remove the city's cap on historic tax credits to encourage more redevelopment of older buildings, and increase aid to the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra to help keep it in business. And that's just scratching the surface of what the folks in the State House might be able to do for their "Rome," just 30 miles north.

Of course, it's entirely possible Mr. Miller's gesture was just meant to rouse his fellow Democrats to support Kirwan education reforms or placate suburban counties worried that city crime is leaking into their jurisdictions. Frankly, we don't care about the politics of the moment, we'd just like to see a little more firefighting out of those 90-day warriors who admit they see some of the challenges facing this city. Are they ready to do something serious or just observe the smoke? They've got until April 6.