

BILL: **Senate Bill 817 - Correctional Services - Parole - Life Imprisonment**

COMMITTEE: **Senate Judicial Proceedings**

SPONSOR: **Senator Waldstreicher, *et al.***

POSITION: **Support**

DATE: **March 5, 2020**

***TESTIMONY BEFORE THE MARYLAND GENERAL ASSEMBLY: SB0817
CORRECTIONAL SERVICES-PAROLE -LIFE IMPRISONMENT***

*Submitted by:
The Symposium Editor, of the University of Baltimore Law Review*

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on this very important issue to ensure fairness in our criminal justice system. In an effort address mass incarceration as the Symposium Editor, for the University of Baltimore Law Review.

Senate Bill 817 seeks to remove provisions from the Correctional Services Article, Section 4–305(b) and 7–301(d), that require the Governor’s approval for inmates serving life in prison to be considered for parole. The Bill also seeks to establish that an inmate who has been sentenced to life imprisonment after being convicted of a crime committed on or after October 1, 2020, is not eligible for parole consideration until the inmate has served 20 years or the equivalent of 20 years when considering allowances for diminution of the inmate’s period of confinement.

As the Symposium Editor for the *University of Baltimore Law Review*, I organized and implemented a Fall 2019 symposium entitled 400 Years: Slavery and the Criminal Justice System which explored the historical ties between the institution of slavery and present-day issues in the criminal justice system, including mass incarceration. The present-day system in Maryland as currently codified in the Correctional Services Article, Section 4–305(b) and 7–301(d), heavily contributes to mass incarceration throughout the state.

According to the *Daily Record*, in November 2019, when Governor Hogan issued parole for juvenile lifers it had been 24 years since an individual, sentenced to life imprisonment as

juvenile, was paroled by a Maryland governor. Although this was a positive step, many more inmates were recommended for parole by the Maryland Parole Commission. Inmates who have shown great progress and reform. This issue is a bi-partisan issue that reaches across party lines. The requirement of the Governor's signature incorrectly politicizes the parole process. This is why Maryland is one of only three states (along with California and Oklahoma) that still requires the gubernatorial signature to grant parole for parole eligible persons serving a life sentence. This is also why I write today in support of Senate Bill 817.

**For these reasons, as the Symposium Editor for the *University of Baltimore Law Review*
I respectfully ask for a favorable report on Senate Bill 817.**

Sincerely,



Alana Glover
Symposium Editor, *University of Baltimore Law Review*