

February 25, 2020

HB 742 - Restrictive Housing Reform Act - SUPPORT

Chairman Clippinger, Vice Chair Atterbeary, and members of the House Judiciary Committee,

The National Alliance on Mental Illness, Maryland and our 11 local affiliates across the state represent a statewide network of more than 45,000 families, individuals, community-based organizations and service providers. NAMI Maryland is dedicated to providing education, support and advocacy for persons with mental illnesses, their families and the wider community.

NAMI Maryland supports this bill because we strongly oppose the use of solitary confinement for incarcerated persons with mental illnesses. This legislation would transform the way our corrections system treats individuals with mental illness by placing a strict 15-day limit on restrictive housing use, and providing daily medical care and evaluation of whether continued restrictive housing is necessary.

Isolated prisoners experience negative psychological effects and are at a significant risk of serious harm, and states that have adopted similar measures report positive results like reduced psychiatric symptoms and less violence.

For these reasons, NAMI Maryland asks for a favorable report on HB 742.

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