



Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services

Office of the Secretary Office of Government and Legislative Affairs

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BILL: HOUSE BILL 801

POSITION: LETTER OF INFORMATION

EXPLANTION: This bill requires the Commissioner of the Division of Correction to provide a prerelease facility for female inmates and requiring the Commissioner utilize evidence-based programs and practices and innovative programs and practices to provide prerelease services.

COMMENTS:

- The Department's Division of Correction (DOC) operates approximately 17 State correctional facilities, which house offenders sentenced to incarceration for 18 months and longer. The Department also runs the Baltimore City Pretrial Complex, which houses pretrial detainees and inmates sentenced to incarceration for 18 months and less.
- The Department is in the process of redeploying the Brockbridge Correctional facility to a dynamic prerelease and reentry facility that will provide female and male inmates with evidence-based, equitable programming.
- The Department practices equitable programming, yet this bill requires DOC to establish a separate prerelease facility for women or alter existing programs or services so as to exclude the males. The costs to establish a new prerelease program for women is projected to have a \$3.4 million annual operational impact.
- The Department supports and utilizes evidence-based practices and programs based on recommended standards from the American Correctional Association (ACA).
- The Department assists all inmates with the opportunity to improve their education, upgrading vocational skills, and obtaining suitable employment through classes to earn industry certification or community college credits, workforce training, and job placement. These services will continue and are expected to be expanded in the new prerelease unit.

- The Department recognizes the value of family reunification. House Bill 801 requires the Department provide transportation for children and family members to visit female inmates before release. This requirement would present both a fiscal and operational challenge to the Department as geographic boundaries for this transportation are not defined, appropriate vehicles would need to be obtained, and the liability insurance could be prohibitive.
- At the Maryland Correctional Institution for Women (MCIW), female inmates can participate in several certification programs, including, hospitality safe-food handling, Serve Safe and culinary arts.
- Female inmates can also earn certifications through the Department of Labor in dietary, sanitation, educational aides, library aides, recycling and maintenance skills such as landscaping, plumber's helper, painting and electrician's helper.
- The Department partners with the Department of Labor in providing correctional education programming. Post-secondary degrees and certificates are offered through Goucher College, and Anne Arundel Community.
- The Department's Maryland Correctional Enterprises (MCE) operates three business units at MCIW, including a computer assisted design, mail and distribution, and a sew shop where inmates learn textile skills, including tailor skills and embroidery.
- Through a partnership with the Department of Labor and Department of Health, inmates can receive certification by participating in the Peer-to-Peer Recovery Specialist Program.
- Reentry planning begins the day an inmate is committed to the custody of the Commissioner of Correction, and every inmate is assessed to determine his or her risk of recidivism. An individualized case plan is developed based on the results of the assessment for every inmate.
- The Division works to mitigate those risks by the establishment of an individualized case plan containing programmatic recommendations intended to address those needs.
 - Substance abuse treatment,
 - Mental health counseling,
 - Cognitive behavioral programming,
 - Basic education,
 - College education,

REVERSE

- Vocational training,
 - Employment readiness training,
 - Parenting,
 - Communication,
 - Financial literacy,
 - Life skills, and
 - Employment on work release.
- In the development of an inmate's individualized case plan, his or her case manager takes into account the remaining time to serve, the inmate's risk of recidivism, and the inmate's programmatic needs to shape the course of the inmate's incarceration, ensuring an inmate is granted access to needed resources prior to his or her scheduled release date.
 - The Department is a proponent for individualized and comprehensive reentry plans involving community provider partnerships for all inmates to reduce barriers to obtaining services required for successful reentry.

CONCLUSION: For these reasons, the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services respectfully asks this Committee to consider this information as it deliberates on House Bill 801.