



GLEN ECHO HEIGHTS MOBILIZATION

Committee: House Judiciary Committee
Testimony on: HB 801, HB 828 – Gender Responsive Pre-Release Act
Position: Support
Hearing Date: February 25, 2020

Glen Echo Heights Mobilization submits this letter in support of companion bills HB 801 and HB 828 to establish equitable pre-release services for Maryland's incarcerated women. It is imperative, if Maryland wishes to reduce recidivism and reduce costs of incarceration, that Maryland's incarcerated female population have the same access to a pre-release facility as men.

These companion bills would require the Department of Corrections to offer a dedicated pre-lease center for incarcerated women in Maryland.

We support this legislation for the following reasons:

- **The number of women in Maryland prisons remains stagnant, while the number of men incarcerated is going down.**
- **A majority of incarcerated women in Maryland are primary caretakers; many are single parents.**
- **Incarcerated women facing societal reentry in Maryland are housed in unsafe maximum-security locations, where the assault rate is higher than at pre-release centers for men.**
- **Women need the same opportunity to prepare for release as men in Maryland.**
- **According to the Maryland Legislative Task Force, a community-based pre-release setting increases the likelihood of successful re-entry and decreases the likelihood of recidivism.**

Conclusion

This bill provides multiple benefits to Maryland citizens. Of principle importance to our organization, it provides equal treatment of the genders, prepares women for a successful re-entry into society, and decreases the chance that such women will be incarcerated again. We urge a favorable report by this Committee.

Glen Echo Heights Mobilization is a group of local residents that meets regularly to discuss and take actions to make progressive change happen at the municipal, county, state and federal levels.