



THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF MARYLAND

Support – HB1463

Correctional Services - Inmates - Intake and Release Requirements
(Reentry Success Act of 2020)
House Judiciary Committee, March 6, 2020

Written testimony submitted by the Rev. Dr. Diane Fadely

. . . 'Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.' (Matthew 25:40)

The Episcopal Diocese of Maryland supports HB1463, a bill that addresses a number of issues that people face after being released from prison and entering the community. Presently, it is common for prisoners to be released into the community without official identification such as a birth certificate, Social Security card, and an MVA ID card or driver's license. This situation makes it impossible for them to verify their identity, access public services, apply for a job, receive treatment in a hospital, access necessary programs and services, or even cash a check.

HB1463 stands to improve outcomes for newly released prisoners and reduce the probability of recidivism. Inmates' identification documents are obtained when they enter prison and, if necessary, prison staff will help them through the process of obtaining copies of their identification documents before their release. This plus pre-release planning, mediation with their families for support, short-term access to cost-free transportation, and a supply of psychotropic medications, as appropriate stand to improve their transition to the community.

The Episcopal Church teaches communicants to seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving their neighbor as themselves, striving for justice and peace among all people, and respecting the dignity of every human being.

The Church's commitment to justice for all people, including prisoners, is exemplified by Resolution 2009-A1091 of the General Convention: ¹*“Resolved, That The Episcopal Church be firmly committed to a system of justice that seeks to provide prisoners with assistance both before and after their release, including alternatives to prison where appropriate, and programs in prison that offer offenders the chance to learn job skills and complete education . . .”*

HB 1463 mirrors the spirit of the Resolution 2009-A1091. Our deeply-held belief in the dignity and human rights of prisoners leads us to respectfully ask you to show strong support for HB1463.

¹ General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Anaheim, 2009* (New York: General Convention, 2009), p. 768.

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