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**March 9, 2022**

**Testimony on Senate Bill 704**  
**Conditions of Pretrial Release - Home Detention Monitoring –**  
**Alterations and Extension**  
**Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee**

**Position: Favorable**

Maryland Nonprofits is a statewide association of more than 1300 nonprofit organizations and institutions. We urge you to support Senate Bill 704.

In 2021, the General Assembly passed House Bill 319 (Chapter 597) that assured that indigent defendants would not be denied access to pre-trial home detention programs simply by virtue of their inability to afford program fees. With federal funds that became available last October the Judiciary itself assumed responsibility for paying the monitoring fees.

Prior to that Act, in certain jurisdictions private monitoring services were charging up to \$500 a month in electronic monitoring fees to the state's poorest populations, with incarceration as the alternative for non-payment. The new procedure authorizing payment on behalf of indigent defendants has successfully kept hundreds of defendants a month from detention during the pandemic, and it was a progressive step in the ongoing effort to decriminalize poverty. But now, that process is set to expire later this year.

Senate Bill 704 will allow for a three-year extension to the Judiciary's private home detention monitoring payment program and will also allow the opportunity for a workgroup to study the issue further.

**We urge you to give Senate Bill 704 a favorable report.**



*Maryland Nonprofits' mission is to strengthen organizations and networks for greater quality of life and equity.*