



Testimony for the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

March 9, 2022

SB 774 - Correctional Services - Medical Parole - Life Imprisonment

FAVORABLE

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The ACLU of Maryland urges a favorable report on HB 920, which would eliminate the need for gubernatorial approval of medical parole for inmates serving life imprisonment sentences, creating needed uniformity between the medical parole process and all other parole processes.

Last year, the General Assembly voted to remove the Governor from parole for people serving life sentences. We are grateful to all who worked to ensure the passage of this important legislation, which helps to depoliticize parole.

It was clearly the legislature's intent was to remove the Governor from all parole decisions for individuals sentenced to life imprisonment. However, the section of the code pertaining to medical parole was omitted from the bill draft, resulting in a situation where only medical parole cases require gubernatorial action. This legislation would simply correct that omission.

As a result of this error, medical parole decisions are still subject to a waiting period of up to almost 6 months. The need for the Parole Commission to be able to act expeditiously is arguably most critical in those cases where the parole candidate is seriously ill or dying.

For the foregoing reasons, the ACLU of Maryland urges a favorable report on SB 774.

