



**REPRODUCTIVE
JUSTICE INSIDE**

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Chairman Luke Clippinger

Vice Chair David Moon

Members of the House Judiciary Committee

HB 877 – Incarcerated Individuals – Reentry Success Act

Position: **FAVORABLE**

Members of the House Judiciary Committee,

Reproductive Justice Inside is the only organization in the country that focuses our work to address the needs of systems-involved individuals seeking quality and timely sexual and reproductive healthcare. Our mission is to support and protect, as a fundamental right and value, reproductive freedom for the entire reproductive lifespan of incarcerated individuals and to address the conditions of confinement where systems-involved individuals are not in complete control of their reproductive futures and freedom.

We offer this testimony in support of HB 877 – Incarcerated individuals – Intake and Release – Reentry Success Act.

This legislation is good policy – It address and provides for key provisions that lend itself to achieving our goals of successful reentry.

The first part of this legislation will address what is an overlooked piece of the reentry puzzle. Individuals who are incarcerated are fragmented from their communities and the support systems that may have existed prior to their incarceration are often strained by their incarceration. Individuals prior to their release must provide an approved home plan. But what this home plan does not account for is the relationship and community that they are returning to. To have the opportunity to engage in thoughtful, guided and supported mediation can rebuild and strengthen relationships prior to release and can help identify potential areas where additional interventions might be needed thus averting post release situations that can lead to rearrest. It provides a way for an individual to be actively involved in their own reentry and relationship stabilization. ***The importance of this cannot be understated.***

This is **NOT** victim mediation – this is solely focused on setting the returning individual, their support system and ultimately their communities to be set up for successful reentry. This legislation has built into it, safe guards that protect victims of crime, protective order status, and court orders regarding victim notification. It also allows a potential identified community individual to not participate if they choose not to and that the Department has the ability to do its due diligence to ensure their rights and appropriateness to participate.

Second this legislation ensures other key outcomes for successful reentry. This is identification, benefit eligibility and enrollment, and medication. We recognize that DPSCS has made great strides in putting into place these mechanisms and that largely they are occurring. But like any other large system, we also know from our work, that it is often not uniform across the state. **HB 877** will then codify these release provisions. *Good policy – good legislation.*

Third, this legislation also provides for public transportation passes for 90 days of travel. *This is critical.* When someone is released they have to report to a parole and probation office within 24 hours, they have to find a job, they have to attend mandated treatment programs, they have to step back into their roles as parents and caregivers, they have to do the mundane things that we all take for granted – grocery shopping, doctors appointments, etc. Without an income, without a vehicle, these become challenging at best. To be released with the travel ability, will enable an individual to meet their obligations and responsibilities. This will have a tremendous impact of an individuals ability to navigate reentry.

HB 877 is good policy and Reproductive Justice Inside urges a **FAVORABLE** report.

Respectfully,

Kimberly Haven
Executive Director
Reproductive Justice Inside