



THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

**Testimony of Senator Jill P. Carter
In Favor of SB0731 – State Facilities - Procedures for Changes and
Closures - Definition and Reporting
Before the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
On February 29th 2024**

Mr. Chairman, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee:

Senate Bill 0731 expands the definition of “state facilities” to not only include facilities that provide health, juvenile, or correctional services, but also benefits to their clients, including incarcerated individuals. This would open those facilities up to more General Assembly oversight, including the right to a public hearing, in the event that they change the use, purpose, function, or try to close a state facility, which are required to occur a minimum of 90 days prior to the closure or change of use, purpose, or function. Before that, they have to both alert their employees and clients, as well as submit a written report to the Governor and certain Senatorial and House committees regarding why this change is taking place.

SB0731 continues the work started with HB0395/SB0223 from last session, which established this protocol for state facilities without those especially for providing benefits to their clientele. What was said about those state facilities last year still applies this year.

These facilities are oftentimes placed in communities for specific reasons, especially as it relates to benefits facilities as oftentimes the services they provide are deemed extremely necessary for the community that they serve. Therefore, when these facilities change purposes or potentially close altogether, it affects many, many stakeholders, most of all the clientele that these facilities serve and may even depend on. They deserve the right to know why these facilities are changing and they deserve the right to be given enough time to make proper adjustments. SB0731 continues the logic started last session, expanding the umbrella to other state facilities that our constituents rely upon.

It's also important to note that these facilities are also to include, at minimum, 25 state employees. This is at least 25 lives that would also be significantly impacted by a facilities change or closure, adding another potential stakeholder to take into consideration. As HB0395/SB0223 did last session, SB0731 makes the procedure for closing state facilities standardized, essential for things like collective bargaining with any unionized employees and also for the peace of mind of employees that work in these facilities.

SB0731 does not stop the closure or change of purpose for these facilities, as sometimes it may be necessary, but it does include state benefits facilities in allowing for stakeholders to be informed about and participate in this process.

As such, I urge this committee to issue a favorable report on Senate Bill 0731.

Respectfully,

Jill P. Carter