

**2024-03-26 HB37 (Support).pdf**

Uploaded by: Adam Spangler

Position: FAV

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**OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL**

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March 26, 2024

TO: The Honorable Will Smith, Jr.  
Chair, Judicial Proceedings Committee

FROM: Rhea L. Harris  
Deputy Counsel, Legislative Affairs, Office of the Attorney General

RE: House Bill 37 – Reentry Services for Women – Commission and Pilot  
Program – Establishment - **Support**

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The Office of the Attorney General requests a favorable report on House Bill 37.

House Bill 37 establishes the Commission on Reentry Services for Women overseen by the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services to create a comprehensive reentry plan for formerly incarcerated women; and establishes the Reentry Pilot Program for Formerly Incarcerated Women to connect formerly incarcerated women to supportive services.

The Office of the Attorney General applauds the sponsor in developing reentry services dedicated to women only. The incarcerated women have different needs from the male counterparts. These women usually have children that they need to reconnect to and provide for, therefore, they need parenting classes and employment training. The Commission provide for in House Bill 37 will be able to focus on the incarcerated women and identify gender gaps in reentry services. The Commission is required to provide a Pilot Program plan for these women which will be tailored to their needs.

For the foregoing reasons, the Office of the Attorney General requests a favorable report on House Bill 37.

cc: The Honorable J. Sandy Bartlett  
Judicial Proceedings Committee Members

# **HB37 Senate.pdf**

Uploaded by: Carmen Kaarid

Position: FAV



**COMMISSION FOR WOMEN  
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT CLUSTER**

March 25, 2024  
Senator William Smith  
Chair, Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee  
Miller Senate Office Building  
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: HB 37 Reentry Services for Women - Commission and Pilot Program - Establishment

Position: **SUPPORT**

Dear Chairperson Smith and members of the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee,

On behalf of the Montgomery County Commission for Women, I am writing to ask for your support of HB 37 — Reentry Services for Women - Commission and Pilot Program - Establishment. There are currently limited services available to women in Maryland who are preparing to reenter their communities, with only one women-only reentry program located in Baltimore City.

Research has shown that substance abuse, weak social bonds, unemployment, and lack of education and skills are the most prevalent reasons for women to recidivate and return to incarceration, starting a vicious cycle that makes it very difficult for them to break free and become productive members of our state. When women are incarcerated, it not only impacts them, but whole family systems face negative consequences. Women need support when they return home from incarceration to ensure they can provide a stable environment for themselves, their children, and others who depend on them for support and care.

CFW supports this bill because this program will help provide women with the necessary tools and skills to support themselves and their families financially, contributing to their empowerment and self-sufficiency. This can include vocational training, education, and assistance finding employment, all crucial for rebuilding their lives.

Effective programming for women transitioning from prison is not only a matter of social justice but also a pragmatic approach to building safer, healthier, and more equitable communities. By addressing the specific needs of women and providing comprehensive support, society can break the cycle of incarceration and promote positive, lasting change.

It is time for Maryland to ensure that women returning from incarceration have the support they need to reduce their risk of recidivism and improve their odds of a safe, effective, and productive return to Maryland communities. We urge a favorable report on HB 37.

Sincerely,  
Montgomery County Commission for Women

# **HB0037\_Reentry\_Services\_for\_Women\_Commission\_and\_P**

Uploaded by: Cecilia Plante

Position: FAV



**TESTIMONY FOR HB0037**  
**Reentry Services for Women**  
**Commission and Pilot Program - Establishment**

**Bill Sponsor:** Delegate Bartlett

**Committee:** Judiciary Judicial Proceedings

**Organization Submitting:** Maryland Legislative Coalition

**Person Submitting:** Aileen Alex, co-chair

**Position:** FAVORABLE

I am submitting this testimony in favor of HB0037 on behalf of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. The Maryland Legislative Coalition is an association of activists - individuals and grassroots groups in every district in the state. We are unpaid citizen lobbyists, and our Coalition supports well over 30,000 members.

HB0037 aims to address the reentry challenges faced by formerly incarcerated women. It establishes the Commission on Reentry Services for Women, which is to create a comprehensive reentry plan specifically tailored for formerly incarcerated women. It also establishes the Reentry Pilot Program to connect formerly incarcerated women with support services.

This bill is a logical follow-up to SB0684/HB0801 which, as enacted, now requires a pre-release center for women with reentry services such as family reunification, employment, housing, and addictions counseling. While there are many pre-release centers for incarcerated men, there were ZERO pre-release centers for women in Maryland. Maryland needs to continue to bolster its programs for returning women.

The pilot program required by HB0037 gives an indication of the comprehensive reentry services more women could receive in the future. The "Local reentry navigators" identified in the bill are to help women access reentry services provided by the Maryland Department of Health, the Department of Housing and Community Development, the Department of Human Services, and the Maryland Department of Labor, among other agencies. This, in combination with tailored reentry plans developed by the Commission on Reentry Services for Women, will offer a smooth transition for women.

For the convicted individual, a smooth transition offers better chances for housing, education, and employment. This, in turn, reduces the impact on families and children who stand to benefit from a more successful reentry of the former offender.

In addition, a successful reentry aids in keeping an individual from becoming a repeat offender. Thus, a more successful reentry could mean avoided costs associated with re-incarceration and the support families would need who were financially dependent on this individual.

The bill represents an important step toward addressing the needs of formerly incarcerated women during their reentry process and bring those services on par with those offered to men. The Maryland Legislative Coalition continues to advocate for this and similar bills that increase chances for a successful reentry for all former offenders.

We support this bill and recommend a **FAVORABLE** report in committee.

# **HB0037 Re-Entry Services for Women- Hawkins 2024 (**

Uploaded by: Christina Hawkins

Position: FAV



**NATASHA DARTIGUE**  
PUBLIC DEFENDER

**KEITH LOTRIDGE**  
DEPUTY PUBLIC DEFENDER

**MELISSA ROTHSTEIN**  
CHIEF OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

**ELIZABETH HILLIARD**  
ACTING DIRECTOR OF GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

## **POSITION ON PROPOSED LEGISLATION**

**BILL: HB 0037- Re-Entry Services for Women**

**FROM: Maryland Office of the Public Defender**

**POSITION: Favorable**

**DATE: 3/1/24**

**The Maryland Office of the Public Defender respectfully requests that the Committee issue a favorable report on House Bill 0037.**

House Bill 0037 will establish the Commission of Reentry Services for Women overseen by the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services (DPSCS) and create a comprehensive reentry plan for formerly incarcerated women; requiring the Commission to study the challenges faced by formerly incarcerated women, gather data from counties, identify service gaps, and report its findings to the Governor and General Assembly by June 30, 2025; establish the Reentry Pilot Program for Formerly Incarcerated Women and connect formerly incarcerated women to supportive services.

My name is Christina Hawkins. I am the Statewide Peer Support Manager for the Maryland Office of the Public Defender as well as a person in long term recovery from a substance use disorder. Being a person in recovery qualifies me to provide support and insight to the individuals that we serve; as I have lived through active addiction and understand the behaviors, feelings, emotions, decision making and so much more that is involved with someone in the grips of addiction. My lived experience also gives me insight on injustices and gaps in our judicial system- especially to those who are suffering from substance use disorders.

The years 2018 and 2019 were some of the hardest years of my life. I found myself reaching bottoms I had never thought possible and suffering the most significant losses of my life including my daughter to the child welfare system and my fiance to an overdose. I was honestly spiraling out of control and that undoubtedly received attention from the local authorities which inevitably led to my being enrolled in our local Drug Court Program.

After many failed attempts at recovery, I was terminated from Drug Court, and sentenced to 4 years at the Maryland Correctional Institution for Women. Prison was a hard atmosphere to adjust to, especially since it was my first time incarcerated- but what made it so much more difficult was the obvious lack of direction by anyone, for anyone. I was never told about the programs offered in the prison, how to be assigned to a job, who my case manager was, what violent and non-violent crimes were and how much time they required an individual to serve, how to use the phone and so much more. I was lost in a completely new and disorderly situation. The truth is, that it was other incarcerated individuals who taught me how to navigate inside the prison walls.

It was very clear to me that there were so many other incarcerated individuals who had no direction. Had I not been taught to advocate for myself- I too would have stayed lost, like so many others. I also quickly learned that many women were being released to the streets without a plan at all- nor did they know how to make one. They would send “letters” to their case managers through institutional mail, without ever receiving a response. There were only 3 case managers to assist a prison populated by over 800 women.

I was fortunate enough to have support on the outside, which included a social worker. I told her about the gaps I was seeing for release plans- and how frustrating it was to hear that women of all ages were actually not rehabilitated at all during their stay at MCIW- and then released to the streets of Baltimore City with nothing but a \$50 bill and maybe if they were lucky, a birth certificate and social security card. These circumstances alone make it impossible for anyone to thrive after any stint of incarceration- bound for recidivism.

As an incarcerated individual myself, I decided that I could not go without at least trying to make some changes. In my previous time in recovery, long before incarceration, I had been an admissions supervisor in a treatment center. I used my experience as well as my Microsoft Office class in the prison to create a referral form. When I knew there was a woman who was going to be released without a plan, I would sit with them and fill out the referral, then send it to the social worker I was in communication with on the outside. Together, we were able to secure placement for several incarcerated women, some of which are still thriving and in recovery today. Today I have 5 years in recovery and work at the Maryland Office of the Public Defender, doing for others what wasn't done for me.

If House Bill 0037 was in effect in 2020, these women, who were only able to find secure housing and placement, through another incarcerated individual, would have been provided with the re-entry services they needed to thrive in the community.

**For these reasons, The Maryland Office of the Public Defender urges this Committee to issue a favorable report on House Bill 0037.**

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**Submitted by: Maryland Office of the Public Defender, Government Relations Division.**

**Authored by: Christina Hawkins, [christina.hawkins@maryland.gov](mailto:christina.hawkins@maryland.gov), 410-344-3401.**

# **Maryland Catholic Conference\_FAV\_HB37 SENATE CROSS**

Uploaded by: Jenny Kraska

Position: FAV



**MARYLAND  
CATHOLIC  
CONFERENCE**

**March 26, 2024**

**HB 37**

**Reentry Services for Women – Commission and Pilot Program - Establishment**

**Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee**

**Position: Favorable**

The Maryland Catholic Conference (MCC) offers this testimony in support of House Bill 37. The Catholic Conference is the public policy representative of the three (arch)dioceses serving Maryland, which together encompass over one million Marylanders. Statewide, their parishes, schools, hospitals, and numerous charities combine to form our state's second largest social service provider network, behind only our state government.

House Bill 37 would establish the Commission on Reentry Services for Women in order to create a comprehensive reentry plane for formerly incarcerated women. This legislation makes important steps towards addressing the unique needs and challenges faced by formerly incarcerated women as they transition back into society.

Our Catholic faith calls us to recognize the inherent dignity of every human person and to provide support and opportunities for individuals to rebuild their lives and contribute positively to their communities. Formerly incarcerated women face numerous barriers to successful reentry, including lack of access to housing, employment, education, healthcare, and supportive services. By establishing the Commission on Reentry Services for Women, we demonstrate our commitment to understanding and addressing these challenges in a comprehensive and holistic manner.

The Catholic tradition emphasizes the importance of solidarity and the preferential option for the poor and vulnerable, urging us to stand in solidarity with those who are marginalized and to advocate for policies and programs that promote their well-being and dignity. Investing in reentry services and supports for formerly incarcerated women is not only a matter of justice but also a moral imperative. It is essential for fostering healing, reconciliation, and the restoration of relationships within families and communities.

This program has the potential to connect formerly incarcerated women to critical services, including housing assistance, job training, mental health counseling, substance abuse treatment, and peer support networks. By investing in reentry services and supports, we can help women break the cycle of incarceration, rebuild their lives, and contribute positively to our communities.

The MCC appreciates your consideration and, for these reasons, respectfully requests a favorable report on House Bill 37.



**HB 37\_MD Center on Economic Policy\_FAV.pdf**

Uploaded by: Kali Schumitz

Position: FAV



MARCH 26, 2024

# Re-entry Services Are Critical for Returning Citizens, Their Families and Maryland Communities

## Position Statement in support of House Bill 37

*Given before the Judicial Proceedings Committee*

Re-entry services are critical to supporting Marylanders who are returning to their communities following a period of incarceration. They provide returning citizens with an opportunity to begin reintegration into their communities with critical services in place to ease this transition. Services such as health care and drug rehabilitation, education, vocational training, and, critically, transitional housing away from prison and nearer to job centers and their community. For many incarcerated women in Maryland, these services are far and few between.

- Data on community releases from The Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services Department (DPSCS) show that in FY 2023 75 out of 199 women returned to communities with **no local reentry agreement** and FY 2024 projections are 14 out of 52<sup>i</sup>.
- Local reentry efforts around the state have been underutilized, according to an article by [Herald Media](#). The report showed that most counties have only a few individuals accepted by the state for this program.
- Very few incarcerated women at the MCI-W are assigned to rehabilitative programming or work release, according to the Department of Legislative Services<sup>ii</sup>.

As amended in the House, HB 37 seeks to address the gaps in services for returning women by establishing a commission for formerly incarcerated women. This commission, staffed by the Governor's Office of Crime Prevention and Policy (GOCPP) and formerly incarcerated women, is tasked with studying the specific challenges women face after incarceration and establish a five-year plan addressing these unique challenges. In addition, House Bill 37 establishes the Pilot Program for Formerly Incarcerated Women to connect formerly incarcerated women to resources with the support of several state agencies such as the Maryland Department of Labor and the Department of Health. Successful re-entry is a critical step to ensure returning women can rebuild their life. **For these reasons, the Maryland Center on Economic Policy respectfully requests that the Judiciary Proceedings Committee make favorable report on House Bill 37.**

## Equity Impact Analysis: House Bill 37

### *Bill summary*

House Bill 37 establishes a Commission on Services for Formerly Incarcerated Women in the Governor's Office of Crime Prevention and Policy, tasked with creating a comprehensive plan for services for formerly incarcerated women. By June 30, 2025, the commission must report its findings and recommendations to the Governor and the General Assembly. In addition, the bill establishes a Pilot Program for Formerly Incarcerated Women to connect formerly incarcerated women to supportive services.

### *Background*

For many incarcerated women in Maryland, re-entry services are far and few between.

- Data on community releases from The Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services Department (DPSCS) show that in FY 2023 75 out of 199 women returned to communities with **no local reentry agreement** and FY 2024 projections are 14 out of 52<sup>iii</sup>.
- Local reentry efforts around the state have been underutilized according to an article by [Herald Media](#). The report showed that most counties have only a few individuals accepted by the State for this program.
- Very few incarcerated women at the MCI-W are assigned to rehabilitative programming or work release, according to the Department of Legislative Services<sup>iv</sup>.

### *Equity Implications*

Since the last prerelease center for women closed in 2010, incarcerated women have had no standalone prerelease center. Instead, these services are offered at the Maryland Correctional Institution for Women, or MCI-W.

- According to a report on gender-based equity in prerelease programming and facilities in Maryland by the commissioner, as of December 18, 2019, there were 1,913 men and 120 women assigned to prerelease. For the female population, 17.5% were assigned to work release, compared to 9% of the male population assigned to work release. About 28% of male inmates and 4% of female inmates were assigned to supervised community-based work details. Men and women are eligible to participate in local reentry programs, but at the time of the report, **there were no women participating**.
- DLS's operating budget analysis for DPSCS highlights the lack of reentry services for women<sup>v</sup>.

### *Impact*

House Bill 37 would likely **impact racial, economic, and gender equity** in Maryland.

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<sup>i</sup> [https://dpscs.maryland.gov/community\\_releases/DPSCS-Community-Releases.shtml](https://dpscs.maryland.gov/community_releases/DPSCS-Community-Releases.shtml)

<sup>ii</sup> <https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/pubs/budgetfiscal/2025fy-budget-docs-operating-Q00-DPSCS-Overview.pdf#page=32>

<sup>iii</sup> [https://dpscs.maryland.gov/community\\_releases/DPSCS-Community-Releases.shtml](https://dpscs.maryland.gov/community_releases/DPSCS-Community-Releases.shtml)

<sup>iv</sup> <https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/pubs/budgetfiscal/2025fy-budget-docs-operating-Q00-DPSCS-Overview.pdf#page=32>

<sup>v</sup> <https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/pubs/budgetfiscal/2025fy-budget-docs-operating-Q00-DPSCS-Overview.pdf#page=32>

# **HB 37 - Services for Formerly Incarcerated Women -**

Uploaded by: Kam Bridges

Position: FAV

# JOTF JOB OPPORTUNITIES TASK FORCE

*Advocating better skills, jobs, and incomes*

## Testimony in Support of House Bill 37

### Services for Formerly Incarcerated Women - Commission and Pilot Program - Establishment

TO: Hon. William C. Smith, Jr., and Members of the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

FROM: Job Opportunities Task Force

DATE: March 26, 2024

The Job Opportunities Task Force (JOTF) is an independent, nonprofit organization that develops and advocates policies and programs to increase the skills, job opportunities, and incomes of low-wage workers and job seekers in Maryland. **JOTF supports House Bill 37, which would establish a Commission on Services for Formerly Incarcerated Women staffed by the Governor’s Office of Crime Prevention and Policy (GOCPP). The commission would study the challenges women face when returning to communities after incarceration; identify all existing programs available to currently and formerly incarcerated women in State agencies; identify service gaps for women who were formerly incarcerated or detained; and create a comprehensive five-year plan to address the needs of and create solutions for women who were formerly incarcerated or detained in the State**

According to a special report by the U.S. Department of Justice [2018 Update on Prisoner Recidivism: A 9-Year Follow-up Period \(2005-2014\)](#), state prisoner recidivism rates average around 68 percent for rearrests within the first three years post-release. And according to a [report](#) by The Sentencing Project, a research and advocacy center working for decarceration in the United States and seeking to address racial disparities in the criminal justice system, a major contribution to recidivism rates throughout the United States is lack of resources or connection to resources that aid prisoners’ prosocial integration into the community. People exiting prison from long-term confinement need stronger support around them. Many people exhibit a low crime risk but have high psychological, financial, and vocational demands that have been greatly exacerbated by their lengthy incarceration.

JOTF is in full support of HB 37, which takes these factors into account and seeks to identify gaps in reentry services and address them. Formerly incarcerated and detained women have specific issues and challenges when returning into society. A system that adequately addresses the myriad issues that returning citizens have while trying to return into society would naturally have resources dedicated specifically to women. This is common sense solution that directly addresses the biggest factors for recidivism. This legislation actually gives formerly incarcerated women the tools to start on the right path, as opposed to releasing them with no support system and feigning surprise when they reoffend.

**For these reasons, JOTF supports House Bill 37 and urges a favorable report.**

**For more information, contact:**

Kam Bridges / Senior Public Policy Advocate / Kam@jotf.org

# **hb37- pilot for reentry services for women- JPR 3-**

Uploaded by: Lee Hudson

Position: FAV



**Delaware-Maryland Synod**  
**Evangelical Lutheran Church in America**  
God's work. Our hands.

Testimony Prepared for the  
**Judicial Proceedings Committee**  
on  
**House Bill 37**  
March 26, 2024  
Position: **Favorable**

Mr. Chairman, members of the Committee; thank you for this opportunity to testify about restorative justice for adjudicated individuals in Maryland. I am Lee Hudson, assistant to the bishop for public policy in the Delaware-Maryland Synod, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

Our community has committed itself publicly to work and advocate for better outcomes for the incarcerated and their communities. We have said, *To dramatically increase chances for success, re-entry support must begin long before release from prison. By identifying needs such as basic life-skill and job-skill training, education and treatment needs at sentencing, and then comprehensively addressing these needs during incarceration, the likelihood of successful transition back into the community is heightened.* (“The Church and Criminal Justice,” ELCA, 2013, pg. 45.)

The next sentence in this policy statement reads, *The religious dimension of life is significant and deserves to be a major component of rehabilitative programs for those interested:* This we have done in Maryland at Jessup since 1985 through the Community of St. Dysmas. One of the goals for our ministry is successful reentry into community, family and society for the incarcerated when they are released.

We share the State’s interest in restorative work to reduce recidivism and reclaim human life for productive, thriving social engagement. A somewhat similar pilot program under Chapter 677 of 2021 was deemed successful. **House Bill 37** will expand that to incarcerated women in Maryland’s Correction’s system. Because the State, its communities and the incarcerated may all benefit, we ask your favorable report.

Lee Hudson

## **re entry - women - testimony - house in senate - 2**

Uploaded by: Lisae C Jordan

Position: FAV



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**Working to end sexual violence in Maryland**

P.O. Box 8782  
Silver Spring, MD 20907  
Phone: 301-565-2277  
Fax: 301-565-3619

For more information contact:  
Lisae C. Jordan, Esquire  
443-995-5544  
[www.mcasa.org](http://www.mcasa.org)

**Testimony Supporting House Bill 37**  
**Lisae C. Jordan, Executive Director & Counsel**  
March 26, 2024

The Maryland Coalition Against Sexual Assault (MCASA) is a non-profit membership organization that includes the State's seventeen rape crisis centers, law enforcement, mental health and health care providers, attorneys, educators, survivors of sexual violence and other concerned individuals. MCASA includes the Sexual Assault Legal Institute (SALI), a statewide legal services provider for survivors of sexual assault. MCASA represents the unified voice and combined energy of all of its members working to eliminate sexual violence. We urge the Judicial Proceedings Committee to report favorably on House Bill 37.

**House Bill 37 – Correctional Services – Services for Formerly Incarcerated Women**

This bill would create a Commission on Services for Formerly Incarcerated Women overseen by the Governor's Office of Crime Prevention & Policy to create a comprehensive reentry plan for formerly incarcerated women, and establish the Reentry Pilot Program for Formerly Incarcerated Women to connect formerly incarcerated women to supportive services.

Over 85 percent of incarcerated women have experienced sexual violence in their lifetimes,<sup>1</sup> and abuse is too often repeated behind prison walls. Women in prison are disproportionately women of color, and the vast majority are economically marginalized. If Maryland is serious about responding to sexual violence and helping survivors heal, it is critical that formerly incarcerated women have the support and services they need to successfully reenter our communities.

**The Maryland Coalition Against Sexual Assault urges the  
Judicial Proceedings Committee to  
report favorably on House Bill 37**

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<sup>1</sup> Women's pathways to jail: The roles & intersections of serious mental illness & trauma, Shannon M. Lynch, Ph.D., Dana D. DeHart, Ph.D., Joanne Belknap, Ph.D., Bonnie L. Green, Ph.D. Georgetown University, submitted to the US Dept of Justice, Bureau of Justice Assistance, 2012.

# **HB37 Testimony MJP.pdf**

Uploaded by: Monica Cooper

Position: FAV



**House Bill 37-Services for Formerly Incarcerated  
Women - Commission and Pilot Program –  
Establishment  
Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee**

**March 26, 2024**

**FAVORABLE**

My name is Monica Cooper, Executive Director of the Maryland Justice Project, an organization dedicated to advocating for Maryland’s incarcerated women and girls and providing support upon their release. I am also a co-founder of the Women’s Pre-Release Equity Coalition, a coalition of non-profit organizations that has been advocating for the re-opening of a pre-release center for women in Maryland since 2016. The Women’s Pre-Release Equity Coalition was the driving force behind the Gender-Responsive Pre-Release Act that the Maryland General Assembly passed in 2020 and again in 2021 with an override of the Governor’s veto. I am a formerly incarcerated woman who spent 14 years at MCI-W. I am submitting this testimony in support of **HB37-Services for Formerly Incarcerated Women-Commission and Pilot Program-Establishment**.

HB37 initially placed the Commission on Services for Formerly Incarcerated Women under the control of the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services (DPSCS), a proposal that neither the Maryland Justice Project nor the Women’s Pre-Release Equity Coalition could support. DPSCS has been failing incarcerated women for decades and placing it in charge of the proposed Commission would only allow it to paper over its own failings and to delay the provision of adequate rehabilitative and re-entry services to women. However, with the bill’s transfer of oversight of the Commission to the Governor’s Office of Crime Prevention, Youth, and Victim Services, we support this bill and urge its passage.

During my time with the Maryland Justice Project, re-entry navigation for women leaving MCI-W has consisted of nothing more than DPSCS dropping women at a transit station with \$50, perhaps a bag of condoms, and little else. Women with mental illness have been left without supervision and without arrangements for family to meet them. Women have been released without adequate drug treatment programming and have relapsed and overdosed shortly after release. The same is true of poor (if any) mental health services that have left women unprepared to cope with the world outside the walls and led to suicides.

DPSCS must be accountable for the services that it is, and is not, providing to women in its custody and upon release. It is my hope, and the hope of all members of the Women’s Pre-Release Equity Coalition, that HB37 will lead to that accountability and to improved services for women returning to their families and communities.

For these reasons, we urge a favorable report on HB37.

Respectfully submitted,

Monica Cooper  
Executive Director  
Maryland Justice Project

# **Testimony in support of crossover bill HB0037.pdf**

Uploaded by: Richard KAP Kaplowitz

Position: FAV

CROSSOVER BILL HB0037\_RichardKaplowitz\_FAV  
3/26/2022

Richard Keith Kaplowitz  
Frederick, MD 21703-7134

**TESTIMONY ON CROSSOVER BILL HB#0037 - POSITION: FAVORABLE**  
**Reentry Services for Women - Commission and Pilot Program – Establishment**

**TO:** Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee

**FROM:** Richard Keith Kaplowitz

**My name is Richard Kaplowitz. I am a resident of District 3. I am submitting this testimony in support of CROSSOVER BILL HB#0037, Reentry Services for Women - Commission and Pilot Program – Establishment**

This bill is an attempt to continue the work to successfully reintegrate formerly incarcerated women back into society by mandating comprehensive reentry plans occur to meet that goal. It will collect data to permit studying challenges faced by those formerly incarcerated women. The data collection will involve local jurisdiction's problems and solutions so service gaps can be identified. A report will be drafted for submission to the Governor and the General Assembly for action steps to be taken to resolve issues and problems identified.

The bill will also create a Reentry Pilot Program connecting formerly incarcerated women to support services to prevent recidivism related to a lack of support after release from incarceration.

Prerelease programs help incarcerated people obtain services before returning to their communities. The only such facility for women in Maryland closed in 2010. JUFJ and our partners helped pass a law in 2020 to establish a new facility, override a veto in 2021, and secure funding in 2022 and 2023.

Prerelease and post release programs help people nearing the end of their prison sentences secure employment, housing, drug treatment and mental health services, and family support. Programs with these services are available for men but not for women. There are multiple such facilities and programs for men in Maryland, but none for women. Funding gaps and lack of a dedication to getting this program going continue to communicate to our women leaving prison that their recovery and return to productive lives in society are valued less than men leaving prison.

This bill will attempt to address the imbalances in post incarceration services between men and women in Maryland. My Jewish faith teaches me that "Acting justly is a joy for the righteous but it terrifies evildoers." (Proverbs 21:15) This bill calls on the state to act justly and pursue righteousness, especially to women reentering society after incarceration.

**I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on CROSSOVER BILL HB0037.**

# 2024 ACNM HB 37 Senate Side.pdf

Uploaded by: Robyn Elliott

Position: FAV



**Committee:** Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

**Bill:** House Bill 37 - Services for Formerly Incarcerated Women – Commission and Pilot Program – Establishment

**Hearing Date:** March 26, 2024

**Position:** Support

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The Maryland Affiliate of the American College of Nurse Midwives (ACNM) supports *House Bill 37 - Services for Formerly Incarcerated Women – Commission and Pilot Program – Establishment*. The bill creates a Commission on Services for Formerly Incarcerated Women to draft a comprehensive plan for services for formerly incarcerated women and a Pilot Program for Formerly Incarcerated Women to connect these women to support services.

Parental incarceration can have a significant impact on a child’s physical and emotional well-being. Children might experience behavioral and mental health issues, poor school performance, and financial hardship while their mother is incarcerated. Women who give birth while incarcerated have additional family-reunification needs, particularly if the jail or prison does not have programs in place to allow the child to remain with the mother after birth. When this relationship is disrupted, the infant is at risk of developing insecure and/or disorganized attachment styles, both of which are linked to poor developmental outcomes.

The Pilot Program created by this bill can direct women towards services to facilitate reunification and help families repair and maintain mother-child relationships which has benefits for the child, the mother, and the entire family. We ask for a favorable report on this legislation. If we can provide any further information, please contact Robyn Elliott at [relliott@policypartners.net](mailto:relliott@policypartners.net) or (443) 926-3443.

# 2024 WLCM HB 37 Senate Side.pdf

Uploaded by: Robyn Elliott

Position: FAV

<b>Committee:</b>	<b>Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee</b>
<b>Bill Number:</b>	<b>House Bill 37</b>
<b>Title:</b>	<b>Services for Formerly Incarcerated Women – Commission and Pilot Program – Establishment</b>
<b>Hearing Date:</b>	<b>March 26, 2024</b>
<b>Position:</b>	<b>Support</b>

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The Women’s Law Center of Maryland (WLC) supports *House Bill 37 - Services for Formerly Incarcerated Women – Commission and Pilot Program – Establishment*. The bill creates a Commission on Services for Formerly Incarcerated Women to draft a comprehensive plan for services for formerly incarcerated women and a Pilot Program for Formerly Incarcerated Women to connect these women to support services.

Discourse on criminal justice policy and reentry reform tend to either ignore or marginalize the significance of the growing number of incarcerated women, especially those who are parenting. Similarly, the Federal Bureau of Prisons and state departments of corrections have yet to fully recognize the distinct gender- and family-specific considerations of incarcerating pregnant women and mothers with minor children. Across the country, there are few prison-based programs specifically designed for pregnant and parenting women, and none in Maryland. The inadequacy of services for these women is not limited to incarceration settings but affects women at every point in their involvement with the criminal justice system. Pre-trial diversion and release services, court-sentenced alternatives, and re-entry programs for mothers are restricted in number, size, and effectiveness because the system was developed to serve men.<sup>i</sup>

This bill is critical to recognize the unique support needs of formerly incarcerated women. We strongly urge a favorable report. If we can provide any further information, please contact Robyn Elliott at [relliott@policypartners.net](mailto:relliott@policypartners.net) or (443) 926-3443.

**The Women’s Law Center of Maryland is a private, non-profit, legal services organization that serves as a leading voice for justice and fairness for women. It advocates for the rights of women through legal assistance to individuals and strategic initiatives to achieve systemic change, working to ensure physical safety, economic security, and bodily autonomy for women in Maryland.**

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<sup>i</sup> Mothers Behind Bars: A state-by-state report card and analysis of federal policies on conditions of confinement for pregnant and parenting women and the effect on their children. <https://nwlc.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/mothersbehindbars2010.pdf>

# **HB0037 Re-Entry Services for Women- S.Pangburn 202**

Uploaded by: Shalon Pangburn

Position: FAV



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**MELISSA ROTHSTEIN**  
CHIEF OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

**ELIZABETH HILLIARD**  
ACTING DIRECTOR OF GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

## **POSITION ON PROPOSED LEGISLATION**

**BILL: HB 0037- Re-Entry Services for Women**

**FROM: Maryland Office of the Public Defender**

**POSITION: Favorable**

**DATE: 3/3/24**

**The Maryland Office of the Public Defender respectfully requests that the Committee issue a favorable report on House Bill 0037.**

House Bill 0037 will establish the Commission of Reentry Services for Women overseen by the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services (DPSCS) and create a comprehensive reentry plan for formerly incarcerated women; requiring the Commission to study the challenges faced by formerly incarcerated women, gather data from counties, identify service gaps, and report its findings to the Governor and General Assembly by June 30, 2025; establish the Reentry Pilot Program for Formerly Incarcerated Women and connect formerly incarcerated women to supportive services.

My name is Shalon Pangburn; I am a Certified Peer Recovery Specialist II for the Maryland Office of the Public Defender as well as a person in long term recovery from a substance use disorder. Due to my lived experiences with active addiction I have the knowledge and understanding to assist others through their life in active addiction to recovery. Although every person suffering from addiction does not necessarily have the experience of crossing paths with the justice system through various arrests or incarcerations, I do. These experiences give me further knowledge of the injustices incarcerated women experience and how having a substance use disorder further complicates incarceration, creating unnecessary barriers.

I have experienced many ups and downs during my 13 years in active addiction which resulted in various arrests and incarcerations. In 2012 I experienced my first “brush” with the justice system which resulted in a 1 year sentence to be served at the Harford County Detention Center. I spent that time looking for education and assistance with what I felt was the core issue, my drug addiction.

I was met with minimal assistance and resources in the detention center. Upon leaving on parole, I was met with no assistance or resources to again address the core issue of addiction or to prevent my return to incarceration.

Recovery was my desire but I was lost trying to find a path. For the next several years I was arrested in both Baltimore and Harford Counties which resulted in various periods of incarceration. Throughout these years I was met with no guidance to prevent my return to the justice system. My involvement with the justice system was a side effect of my unaddressed substance use disorder.

My story was different than most of my friends in active addiction and those I had been incarcerated with. I had a home with two supportive parents to return to. I had the support but again not the direction as to where I could go to get help. I watched others be released to the street because they did not have the supportive family like I did and were not given realistic usable resources. Of course there were resources available to each of us but we weren't given direction on how to access these or the ability to grasp what was really available to us. We relied on each other for support and guidance but even that was limited.

While at Harford County Detention Center I felt extreme frustration as most of the programs they had available were for the male incarcerated individuals only. Female incarcerated individuals were left with minimal support and a lot of idle time. Luckily while at Baltimore County Detention Center I was court ordered to their START program. In that program I was met with more information than I knew what to do with. We spent the next 3 months working through various programs which included the recovery process, addressing past trauma and guidance to create a better life for ourselves once we were released. We were given an abundance of resources, however those resources were for the most part available in Baltimore City which created limited opportunities for those of us who did not live in the City and had minimal transportation options.

Once I was released from jail and was able to address my substance use disorder appropriately, I began actively searching for resources. These resources were not just for myself but to pass along and share with those ladies I had been incarcerated with.

Currently I have 5 years in recovery and work with various programs and resource centers to provide education, resources and opportunities to the clients I work with as a Certified Peer Recovery Specialist II for the Maryland Office of the Public Defender.

If House Bill 0037 were in effect during the years I was incarcerated, myself and so many others would have been given a better chance to succeed and thrive in a life not ruled by active addiction. We would have been given the tools needed to effectively make changes and the resources necessary to begin life after incarceration.

**For these reasons, The Maryland Office of the Public Defender urges this Committee to issue a favorable report on House Bill 0037.**

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**Submitted by: Maryland Office of the Public Defender, Government Relations Division.**

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