



Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland

Testimony in Support of HB 37 Reentry Services for Women – Commission and Pilot Program- Establishment.

TO: Delegate Luke Clippinger, Chair and Members of the Judiciary Committee
FROM: Karen “Candy” Clark, Criminal Justice Lead Advocate
Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland
DATE: March, 2024

The Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry (UULM-MD) asks for a favorable vote for **HB 37 Reentry Services for Women – Commission and Pilot Program- Establishment**. This bill addresses the plight of the formerly incarcerated women who need assistance to successfully navigate the challenges and changes as they rebuild their—and their families’—lives on the other side of the walls.

Several years ago I was at the House of Delegates attending a gathering of formerly incarcerated women who were waiting for a speaker. An agitated young mother spoke up who shared that when she was released she had to call different agencies to locate her three children (each in a different facility), find transportation to collect them, and then had little to no money or stamps for food. She was traumatized and angrily let us all know that there was NOTHING, absolutely, NOTHING she would NOT do to take care of her children.

Every woman has their own story; and of course not all needs are the same. Delegate Bartlett’s HB 37 addresses this problem. It establishes a Commission that creates a comprehensive reentry plan for these women. I especially like that its board members include “Reentry Professionals” AND also a woman who has been incarcerated. All stakeholders are at the table to monitor the Five year Reentry Pilot Program which will collect data from Maryland’s various counties, identify key service needs and ensure the ladies know how to make connections with them.

Our UU faith calls us to incorporate our principles with our actions. Delegate Bartlett’s bill aligns with our second principle that our actions are compassionate and exemplify equity and justice.

Again the UULM-MD asks for a favorable vote for HB 37,

In appreciation of your service,

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