



**MARYLAND
CATHOLIC
CONFERENCE**

March 07, 2024

HB 1144

Corrections – Segregated Housing - Limitations

House Judiciary Committee

Position: Favorable

The Maryland Catholic Conference (MCC) offers this testimony in support of House Bill 1144. 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 1144 concerns segregated housing and training for correctional personnel. This legislation is a critical step towards ensuring the human treatment of incarcerated individuals and promoting their successful reintegration into society.

From a Catholic perspective, every person is endowed with inherent dignity and worth, regardless of their past actions or circumstances. It is our moral duty to ensure that the rights and dignity of all individuals, including those who are incarcerated, are respected and upheld. Segregated housing, often used as a disciplinary measure in correctional facilities, can have detrimental effects on the mental and emotional well-being of individuals and may hinder their rehabilitation and reintegration efforts.

The establishment of guidelines and procedures for the placement of incarcerated individuals in certain types of segregated housing is a positive step towards promoting transparency, accountability, and consistency in correctional practices. By ensuring that placement decisions are based on clear criteria and conducted in a fair and humane manner, we can mitigate the potential harms associated with segregated housing and create conditions that support rehabilitation and positive behavior change.

Furthermore, requiring hearing officers and personnel involved in the supervision and care of individuals placed in restrictive housing to undergo certain training is essential for ensuring that they possess the knowledge, skills, and sensitivity needed to interact with incarcerated individuals in a respectful and compassionate manner. This training should include education on trauma-informed care, de-escalation techniques, mental health awareness, and alternatives to segregation, reflecting principles of restorative justice and the Catholic emphasis on mercy and redemption.

The MCC appreciates your consideration and, for these reasons, respectfully requests a favorable report on House Bill 1144.

