



## **SB 648: Correctional Services - Medical Parole - Life Imprisonment**

### **Testimony of the Maryland Independent Living Network**

#### **SUPPORT**

Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee, February 13, 2025

The Maryland Independent Living Network is a coalition of the Maryland Statewide Independent Living Council and the seven Maryland-based Centers for Independent Living (CIL). CILs are created by federal law. CILs work to enhance the civil rights and quality of services for people with disabilities. There are seven CILs located throughout Maryland, operated by and for people with disabilities. CILs provide Information and Referral, Advocacy, Peer Support, Independent Living Skills training, and Transition Services to individuals with disabilities in their communities.

The Independent Living Network submits this written testimony in **support** of SB 648.

SB 648 would expedite medical parole for seriously and permanently incapacitated individuals serving a life sentence, including many with significant and longstanding disabilities. Current safeguards and community protections remain in the statute.

The average age of incarcerated persons is continuously rising. Older persons that are incarcerated generally have higher medical needs and may have acquired a disability during incarceration requiring special medical care.

Often, treatment for older persons that are incarcerated with higher medical needs or special medical care pose a low public safety risk once medically paroled. Reducing the time required to be granted medical parole by removing the requirement of gubernatorial approval permits a parolee to have access to care and services not typically provided in prison.

Granting medical parole under the bill's circumstances is compassionate, fair and reasonable.

The Maryland Independent Living Network appreciates the consideration of these comments.

The Maryland Independent Living Network strongly **supports** SB 648 and urges a **favorable** report.

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