



MONTGOMERY COUNTY COMMISSION FOR WOMEN

February 13, 2025

Senator William C. Smith, Jr.
Chair, Judicial Proceedings Committee
2 East Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: SB 632 Correctional Services-Comprehensive Rehabilitative Prerelease Services–Female Incarcerated Individuals

Position: **SUPPORT**

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

I am writing on behalf of the Montgomery County Commission for Women to express our strong support for SB632, the Correctional Services-Comprehensive Rehabilitative Prerelease Services–Female Incarcerated Individuals bill. This legislation is a crucial step forward in addressing the unique needs of women in Maryland’s correctional system, and we believe it will have a transformative impact on their successful reentry into society.

Background and Urgency:

Currently, prerelease services for women are provided in a Department of Corrections parking lot in Baltimore, an area notorious for human trafficking. This environment is not only unsafe but also wholly unsuitable for the rehabilitation of individuals who are working to heal from past trauma. We cannot expect women, many of whom are mothers and heads of households, to prepare for a fresh start in such a place. It is unacceptable that we continue to fail the very individuals who need our support the most.

Around 170 women are currently in prerelease status in Maryland, and most of these women are mothers with families that depend on them. Empowering these women with the right tools for reentry is not just about helping the individual—it’s about supporting their children and families as well. When these women succeed, it creates a ripple effect that strengthens entire communities, and that is why it is critical to provide them with comprehensive services designed to ensure success.

The Life Skills and Reentry Center for Women (LSRCW):

The Life Skills and Reentry Center for Women (LSRCW) proposed in this bill is an essential solution. The plan includes a 90-bed facility, with an estimated cost of \$33 million. Importantly, funding for the design and site selection has already been secured, and Delegate Crutchfield is working diligently with the Appropriations Committee to ensure the necessary resources are allocated for the completion of this project.

We fully support the establishment of this center, which will provide a safe and nurturing environment for women to receive the critical services they need to successfully reintegrate into their communities.

These services include:

- **Job skills training** to help women secure stable employment,
- **Drug treatment programs** to support their recovery,
- **Mental health services** to address underlying trauma and challenges,
- **Child bonding classes** to help mothers reconnect with their families.

These services are tailored specifically to the needs of women and will provide them with the tools they need to build a stable and fulfilling life after incarceration.

Location and Equity Considerations:

The proposed facility is most likely to be located in Baltimore City, home to many women who would benefit from the center. Locating the facility near their communities is crucial—it will provide easier access to resources, maintain essential family connections, and ease reintegration.

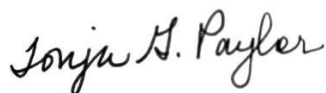
Moreover, we cannot ignore the racial inequities that persist in our correctional system. The majority of women in prerelease status at the Maryland Correctional Institution for Women (MCIW) are Black women. This legislation represents an opportunity to address these disparities by providing a targeted, systemic solution to uplift and empower these women.

Conclusion:

We urge all Senate members to support SB632 and its companion bill in the House. This legislation is not just an investment in women—it is an investment in families, communities, and the future of our state. By providing the right services and support, we can empower women returning to their communities after incarceration to thrive and contribute to society in meaningful ways.

Thank you for your attention to this critical issue. We look forward to working together to ensure this bill's success and create a brighter future for women in Maryland.

Sincerely,



Commissioner Tonja Paylor
Member, Policy & Legislative Committee
Montgomery County Commission for Women