



MARYLAND LEGISLATIVE LATINO CAUCUS

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TO: Senator William C. Smith Jr., Chair
Senator Jeff Waldstreicher, Vice Chair
Judicial Proceedings Committee Members
FROM: Maryland Legislative Latino Caucus
DATE: January 28, 2025
RE: SB181 – Correctional Services – Geriatric and Medical Parole

The MLLC supports SB181 – Correctional Services – Geriatric and Medical Parole

The MLLC is a bipartisan group of Senators and Delegates committed to supporting legislation that improves the lives of Latinos throughout our state. The MLLC is a crucial voice in the development of public policy that uplifts the Latino community and benefits the state of Maryland. Thank you for allowing us the opportunity to express our support of SB181.

The Department of Justice finds a minimal public safety benefit to incarcerate high numbers of older men and women.¹ In Maryland, individuals age 35 and younger are the most likely group to be rearrested after release (51.2%).² Geriatric age inmates in Maryland have the lowest recidivism rate out of any other group with approximately 13.5% of individuals likely to be rearrested upon release.³ With older adults in Maryland less likely to reoffend, keeping older individuals incarcerated brings little public safety benefit and instead brings increased costs due to more complex health conditions and needs among elderly adults.⁴ On average, the costs of caring for older inmates is three to nine times the costs of caring for younger inmates.⁵

Medical parole reforms are key to addressing racial disparities in the incarceration of Latino and other marginalized groups in Maryland.⁶ According to the Justice Policy Institute, Latinos in Maryland are incarcerated at a rate 2.5 times higher than their White counterparts.⁷ Additionally, the Maryland State Commission on Criminal Sentencing Policy noted that Hispanic individuals are often sentenced for more serious offenses, leading to longer periods of incarceration.⁸

SB181 adds age as a consideration for an incarcerated individual's eligibility for parole. The Maryland Parole Commission must consider whether there is a reasonable probability that an individual will not recidivate given their age. The bill alters the medical parole evaluation process, specifying provisions under which a licensed medical professional can grant an individual medical parole. In granting this request, the Parole Commission must consider the medical professionals' evaluation and

¹ [The Impact of an Aging Inmate Population on the Federal Bureau of Prisons](#)

² [Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services: 2022 Recidivism Report](#)

³ [The aging prison population: Causes, costs, and consequences](#)

⁴ [For Seriously Ill Prisoners, Consider Evidence-Based Compassionate Release Policies](#)

⁵ Ibid

⁶ [Why Maryland needs geriatric and medical parole reform](#)

⁷ [Race and Incarceration in Maryland](#)

⁸ [An Assessment of Racial Differences in Maryland Guidelines-Eligible Sentencing Events](#)

recommendation as well as the individuals' medical information. The bill also requires individuals' be granted parole if facing imminent death. This provision applies to individuals who are at least 60 years old, have served at least 15 years of their sentence, are not registered or eligible for sex offender registration, and are sentenced to a term in which they are eligible for parole.

With Latinos and other racial minorities making up a disproportionate amount of the state prison population, streamlining the medical parole process will ensure that older individuals among these groups receive better quality health care in their later years.

For these reasons, the Maryland Legislative Latino Caucus respectfully requests a favorable report on SB181.