



MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND  
WOMEN'S DEMOCRATIC CLUB

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**House Bill 190**  
**Judiciary Committee – February 25, 2025**

**SUPPORT**

Thank you for this opportunity to submit written testimony concerning an important priority of the **Montgomery County Women's Democratic Club** (WDC) for the 2025 legislative session. WDC is one of Maryland's largest and most active Democratic clubs with hundreds of politically active members, including many elected officials.

WDC urges the passage of HB 190. This bill will provide much-needed paths to parole opportunities for elderly and infirm inmates. We strongly agree with the Chair of the Maryland Parole Commission in the need for this comprehensive bill.

**Many thousands of Maryland families have been without their loved ones for decades.** There are over 1100 inmates [over the age of 60 in the Maryland, many over age 75](#). These are parents, siblings, aunts, uncles, and grandparents. Families who want to be rejoined with their missing members who may be chronically ill and suffering alone in prison. Maryland families want to be able care for their elders. Young persons in these families would benefit from relationships with their elders.

**These older inmates pose little threat to society.** FBI data show that the crimes of both homicide and rape generally [peak at ages 18-20](#). The Federal Department of Justice reports that individuals engage in criminal behavior for only about a [5-10-year period during their lifetime](#).

**WDC agrees with the American Bar Association's policy** statement that reads: [“Sentences ... should be no more severe than necessary to achieve the societal purposes for which they are authorized.”](#) We abhor the fact that Maryland leads the nation in the rate at which Black citizens are given long sentences. With [a state population that is 32% Black, 76% of those sentenced to 50+years are Black](#). By providing a path to parole for those who have already served very long sentences, this bill will help rectify some of the stark racial inequity in Maryland's sentencing patterns.

**Maryland's Parole Commission** will continue to follow its usual parole hearing and parole procedures for each case. This bill by no means provides a 'get out of jail free card'. The Maryland Parole Commission recognizes the need for this bill and fully supports it, confident in their ability to safeguard the public.

**We ask for your support for HB 190 and strongly urge a favorable Committee report.**

Tazeen Ahmad  
WDC President

Jane Harman  
WDC Criminal Justice Reform  
Subcommittee

Cynthia Rubenstein  
WDC Advocacy Chair