



Bill No: HB1198
Title: Correctional Services-Comprehensive Rehabilitative Prerelease Services-Female Incarcerated Individuals (The Monica Cooper Prerelease Act)
Committee: Judiciary
Hearing: March 4, 2025
Position: FAVORABLE

The Maryland Legislative Agenda for Women (MLAW) is a statewide coalition of women’s groups and individuals formed to provide a non-partisan, independent voice for Maryland women and families. MLAW’s purpose is to advocate for legislation affecting women and families. To accomplish this goal, MLAW creates an annual legislative agenda with issues voted on by MLAW members and endorsed by organizations and individuals from all over Maryland. **HB1198 - Correctional Services-Comprehensive Rehabilitative Prerelease Services-Female Incarcerated Individuals (The Monica Cooper Prerelease Act)** is a priority on the [2025 MLAW Agenda](#) and we urge your support.

[HB1198](#) requires Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services (DPSCS) to correct several critical deficiencies in its current plans for the Life Skills and Reentry Center for Women (LSRCW) and to implement comprehensive, “gender-responsive” rehabilitative services to women classified in the prerelease status.

In 2021, the Maryland General Assembly passed, over Governor Hogan’s veto, the Gender-Responsive Prerelease Act, which required DPSCS to construct a free-standing prerelease center for Maryland’s incarcerated women. Prerelease facilities are community-based facilities operating at the lowest security level and to provide “gender-responsive” programs and services designed for women at the end of their sentences to aid their transition back into their communities. The statute required the facility to begin operation in June 2023. Unfortunately, DPSCS has delayed progress on the facility, and the current plans are unacceptable, will not facilitate the women’s successful transition home, and the programming does not meet the statutory requirement that DPSCS provide “gender-responsive” programming designed for the needs of returning women.

This bill will make the following changes to the original law: 1.) Requires DPSCS to select a site that is at least 3 acres in size; 2.) Increases the bed size from 64 to at least 91; 3.) Locate the facility anywhere in Baltimore City; 4.) Specifically defines what constitutes “gender-responsive” programming and services; 5.) Requires all programming to be provided at the LSRCW and not at other facilities.

We urge you to support of **HB1198**.

MLAW 2025 Supporting Organizations

The following organizations have signed on in support of our 2025 Legislative Agenda:

1199 SEIU United Healthcare Workers East
AAUW Anne Arundel County
AAUW Garrett Branch
AAUW Howard County
AAUW Kensington-Rockville Branch
AAUW Maryland
Anne Arundel County NOW
Bound for Better, advocates for Domestic Violence
Calvert County Democratic Womens' Club
Charles County Commission for Women
Child Justice, Inc.
City of College Park MD
Court Watch Montgomery
Delta Sigma Theta Sorority North Arundel County Alumnae Chapter
FinnCORE, Inc.
Frederick County Commission for Women
Interfaith Action for Human Rights
Kids for Saving Earth
Maryland Chapter, National Organization for Women
Maryland Coalition Against Sexual Assault
Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence
Montgomery County Commission for Women
Montgomery County, MD, NOW
National Coalition of 100 Black Women, Inc., Anne Arundel County Chapter
NCBWSOMD
Salam Sudan Foundation (SSF)
ShareBaby, Inc.
Stella's Girls Incorporated
SUB&S LLC
The Rebuild, Overcome, and Rise (ROAR) Center of UMB
Trans Maryland
Unrooted Culture
Women of Honor International
Women's Equality Day Celebration across Maryland Coalition
Women's Equity Center and Action Network (WE CAN)
Women's Law Center of Maryland
Zonta Club of Annapolis

Maryland Legislative Agenda for Women

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