

## Favorable Report: HB 190 Geriatric and Medical Parole

# Quaker Voice of Maryland

TO: Chair Luke Clippinger and House Judiciary Committee

FROM: Molly Finch, Quaker Voice of Maryland Steering Committee

DATE: February 21, 2025

Quaker Voice of Maryland, an advocacy group representing Quakers throughout Maryland, strongly supports HB190 to facilitate parole of elderly Marylanders and those with serious medical conditions.

This bill simply makes sense.

- **There is strong evidence that older inmates and those with serious medical conditions have exceedingly low rates of recidivism.** The Unger decision (<https://www.baltimoresun.com/2018/12/01/ending-mass-incarceration-lessons-from-the-ungers/>) which led to the release of about 193 prisoners between 2013 and 2019 demonstrated that elderly Maryland inmates with serious charges can be safely released from prison if they are given the right support.
- **It is extremely costly to house the thousands of older and medically compromised inmates currently in the state system.**
- **There will be substantial cost savings to the State if we were to parole these people who are at low risk for repeat offense.**
- **Reducing the population of incarcerated persons needing intensive medical care potentially will result in improvements in the quality of medical care of the healthier population.**
- **It is ethically the right thing to do.** Quakers experience that there is "that of God" in every person -- even those who have made serious mistakes at some point in their lives.

For all these reasons, Quaker Voice of Maryland strongly supports passage of HB190.

*Marshall "Eddie" Conway on the day of his release as part of the Unger decision (in 2014), after 44 years incarcerated in the Maryland prison system. Eddie Conway, who was a regular attendee at Homewood Friends Meeting (a Quaker meeting in Baltimore) contributed substantially to the Baltimore community from the time of his release until his death in 2023.*

