

CHARLOTTE A. CRUTCHFIELD, ESQ.  
*Legislative District 19*  
Montgomery County

DEPUTY MAJORITY WHIP

Judiciary Committee

*Subcommittees*

Chair, Family and Juvenile Law

Public Safety



The Maryland House of Delegates  
6 Bladen Street, Room 403  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401  
410-841-3485 · 301-858-3485  
800-492-7122 Ext. 3485  
Charlotte.Crutchfield@house.state.md.us

THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

March 4, 2025

The House Judiciary Committee  
The Honorable Luke Clippinger, Chair  
100 Taylor House Office Building  
6 Bladen Street  
Annapolis, MD 21401

**Re: House Bill 1198: Correctional Services-Comprehensive Rehabilitative Prerelease Services-Female Incarcerated Individuals (The Monica Cooper Prerelease Act)**

Dear Chairman Clippinger, Vice-Chair Bartlett and Committee Colleagues:

This legislation seeks to change the current proposed location and timeline for the design, construction and operation (to include evidence based and gender-responsive services) of a prerelease center for women as required to be constructed under Chapter 16 (2021) of the Maryland Code as defined by SB684 (Correctional Services- Prerelease Unit for Women-Facilities and Services (Gender-Responsive Prerelease Act), passed by the General Assembly in February 2021. The Act required the Maryland Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services (DPSCS) to complete construction and begin operation of a prerelease center on or before June 1, 2023.

The initial description of the proposed facility location and construction requirements were set out in a letter dated July 2022, by the former DPSCS Secretary, Robert L. Green to include:

- A two (2) to four (4) acre viable site.
- Located within or adjacent to one of three (3) zip codes: 21215, 21217, and 21218 (Baltimore City).
- Close proximity to public transportation.
- Close proximity to a hospital or a community-based facility that provides clinical services.
- Not located near a daycare, school, and/or church.

The Department of General Services (DGS) published an initial “Project Program Part I and Part II for the “Life Skills and Re Entry Center for Women” (aka Women’s Prerelease Center) on December 15, 2022, with the following:

- Site location for the LSRCW, 1624 Eutaw Place, Baltimore.

- The Eutaw Place site is 3.6-acres.
- Planned as a 64-bed facility.
- Planned as a 61,700 gross square foot facility.
- The women’s pre-release programming described as “Project Fresh”, the first phases of which will be completed at MCI-W before a woman is moved to the LSRCW.
- Estimated cost, \$86,752,000.

Thereafter, DGS published a revised “Project Program Part I and Part II for the LSRCW on September 18, 2023, with the following:

- Changed the site location to 717 Forrest Street, Baltimore.
- The Forest Street site is 0.97 acres.
- Bed capacity, square footage, programing and cost all remained unchanged.

However, the revised Program I and Part II does not satisfy the requirements of the Gender-Responsive Pre-Release Act. It fails for the following reasons:

- Site is too small for planned programming and outdoor spaces and contravenes the size requested by DPSCS and DGS.
- Bed capacity is too low to provide pre-release housing for all women who will be eligible, which means that women in pre-release status will remain at MCI-W.
- DPSCS plans to leave women in MCI-W for a portion of pre-release instead of moving them to the LSCRW upon eligibility, which is one justification for 64-bed capacity.
- Therapeutic and substance use programming to be provided at Baltimore Therapeutic and Treatment Center, 900 bed, overwhelming male residential facility. Not gender responsive services as required by the Act and not directed at the needs of returning women.
- The site is in a known “drug-infested” area including trafficking to the adjacent Metropolitan Diagnostic and Treatment Center.
- Site location is unsafe for family visitation.

Ultimately, DPSCS has not followed the letter and spirit of SB684. There have been numerous delays and setbacks in locating a viable location. DPSCS has not used funding resources appropriated in a timely manner to meet construction deadlines. As a result, no construction has started on the prerelease center. Furthermore, incarcerated women are not receiving the benefits of evidence-based and gender responsive services.

This bill will require that DPSCS follow a set timeline for site location, design, construction and operation. But, most importantly, it will have specific requirements for evidence-based and gender responsive services for the residents of the prerelease center.

Our incarcerated women deserve to be given an opportunity to be successful. Promises have been made but have not been fulfilled. Let’s make sure that the construction of the women’s prerelease center is not further delayed.

**I respectfully request a favorable report for House Bill 1198.**

Sincerely,

*Charlotte Crutchfield*

Delegate Charlotte Crutchfield