



TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 0311

Correctional Services - Medical Parole - Life Imprisonment

Judiciary

FAVORABLE

TO: Del. Luke Clippinger, Chair; Del. J. Sandy Bartlett, Vice Chair and members of the House Judiciary Committee

FROM: Rev. Kenneth Phelps, Jr., Maryland Episcopal Public Policy Network

DATE: February 25, 2025

In 2015 (2015-A011) and again in 2018 (2018-D004), the Episcopal Church adopted resolutions calling for comprehensive reforms on both the state and federal level aimed at reducing mass incarceration practices, disparities in sentencing, the elimination of solitary confinement and above all else and in all matters, the humane treatment of prisoners.

HB 0311 would allow the State to treat with mercy, dignity and respect, individuals who are “chronically debilitated or incapacitated by a medical or mental health condition, disease, or syndrome” and who pose no physical threat to the safety of the general public.

The quality of mercy is not strained, and our scriptures and traditions remind us that we are to bring relief to those who are captive. The captives in this instance are suffering in isolation, in some instances facing death. Continued incarceration in these cases is rendered pointless, but acts of mercy speak volumes about who we strive to become as a society.

The Diocese of Maryland requests a Favorable report