



Bill No: HB647  
Title: Correctional Services - Restrictive Housing  
Committee: Judiciary  
Hearing: March 4, 2025  
Position: FAVORABLE

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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. **HB647 - Family Law - Protective Orders - Surrender of Firearms** is a priority on the [2025 MLAW Agenda](#) and we urge your support.

**HB647** limits length of time one can be placed in restrictive housing in Maryland prisons, and it excludes certain people from this damaging treatment, including women who are pregnant, postpartum and or have recently suffered a miscarriage.

This legislation would circumscribe the use of isolation in Maryland prisons. The restriction to single or double cells for upwards of 22 hours a day is called restrictive housing in Maryland. The practice is widely used despite the known physical and mental harm such isolation. Women and men locked up in this way suffer depression, anxiety, hypertension and other physical deterioration, and they are far more likely to mutilate themselves or commit or attempt suicide.

The United Nations included strict limits on the use of solitary confinement, which is effectively the same as restrictive housing. In its revised Minimum Standards for the Treatment of Prisoners, known as the Nelson Mandela Rules, at a minimum, all nations should restrict their use of solitary to no more than 15 days at a time, and ban it altogether for children, pregnant women and new mothers, individuals with mental illness and physical disabilities, and other vulnerable populations. This legislation reflects some of those restrictions

While current law significantly limits instances in which pregnant women can be placed in restrictive housing, this legislation will hopefully exclude pregnant women altogether (current law provides significant limitations), as well as women who have recently given birth and women who have recently suffered a miscarriage. Any solitary confinement has been shown to do significant harm, but women in these conditions are considered to be particularly at risk. Others, such as women and men with serious mental illnesses, may also be excluded.

Maryland's 2022 report on the use of restrictive housing noted that the total population of incarcerated women in FY 2022 was 728. Of those, 28 were on administrative segregation, and 116 were on disciplinary segregation. Both forms of segregation are considered restrictive housing, and there can often be little distinction in the impact of the experience on those in either. The number of men in prison and in restrictive housing is much greater, and they return to their parents, wives, children and communities with the disabling impact of restrictive housing experiences.

We urge you to support of **HB647**.

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## **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

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