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Delegate J. Sandy Bartlett, Vice Chair
House Judiciary Committee
100 Taylor House Office Building
101 Taylor House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Dear Chair Clippinger, Vice Chair Bartlett, and Members of the Committee:

RE: HB1198 - Correctional Services - Comprehensive Rehabilitative Prerelease Services - Female Incarcerated Individuals (The Monica Cooper Prerelease Act)

Position: SUPPORT

The Maryland Psychological Association, (MPA), which represents over 1,000 doctoral-level psychologists throughout the state, asks the House Judiciary Committee to report FAVORABLY on HB1198.

This bill will provide a much-needed transition back into the community for female offenders, providing comprehensive services prior to their release. This engagement in services prior to release from incarceration is a unique and revolutionary way to provide a smooth transition back into the community, thereby reducing recidivism.

Reentry issues are one of the biggest barriers to success for recently released individuals. Historically, those barriers have ranged from issues with transportation, housing, employment, childcare, addiction and mental health. The stress placed on reentrants to find and engage in these services while navigating their transition out of the structured environment of prison is overwhelming and often sets them up for failure. The strategy in this bill is an innovative way to remove those obstacles and set female reentrants on a path to success and healing.

Thank you for considering our comments on HB1198. If we can be of any further assistance as the Judiciary Committee considers this bill, please do not hesitate to contact MPA's Legislative Chair, Dr. Stephanie Wolf at mpalegislativcommittee@gmail.com.

Respectfully submitted,

David Goode-Cross, Ph.D.
David Goode-Cross, Ph.D.
President

Stephanie Wolf, JD, Ph.D.
Stephanie Wolf, JD, Ph.D.
Chair, MPA Legislative Committee

cc: Richard Bloch, Esq., Counsel for Maryland Psychological Association
Barbara Brocato & Dan Shattuck, MPA Government Affairs