



LEGISLATIVE BLACK CAUCUS OF MARYLAND, INC.

The Maryland House of Delegates, 6 Bladen Street, Room 300, Annapolis, Maryland 21401

410-841-3185 • 301-858-3185 • 800-492-7122 Ext. 3185 • Fax 410-841-3175 • 301-858-3175 • Black.Caucus@house.state.md.us

EXECUTIVE OFFICERS

Chair

Delegate Jheanelle Wilkins, District 20

1st Vice Chair

Delegate Melissa Walls, District 40

2nd Vice Chair

Delegate Karen R. Toles, District 25

Treasurer

Delegate Marlon Amprey, District 40

Secretary

Delegate Jamila J. Woods, District 26

Financial Secretary

Senator Arthur Ellis, District 28

Chaplain

Delegate Jeffrie E. Long, Jr., District 27B

Parliamentarian

Delegate Stephanie Smith, District 45

Historian

Delegate Cheryl E. Pasteur, District 11A

Executive Director

Ufuoma O. Agarin, J.D.

MEMBERS

Senator Malcolm Augustine, District 47
Senator Benjamin Brooks, District 10
Senator Jill P. Carter, District 41
Senator Nick Charles, District 25
Senator Antonio L. Hayes, District 40
Senator Michael A. Jackson, District 27
Senator Cory V. McCray, District 45
Senator C. Anthony Muse, District 26
Senator William C. Smith, Jr., District 20
Senator Charles E. Sydnor III, Esq., District 44
Senator Alonzo T. Washington, District 22
Senator Mary L. Washington, District 43
Senator Ron Watson, District 23
Delegate Gabriel Acevero, District 39
Delegate Jacqueline T. Addison, District 45
Delegate Tiffany Alston, District 24
Delegate Vanessa E. Atterbeary, District 13
Delegate J. Sandy Bartlett, District 32
Delegate Adrian Boalo, District 23
Delegate Regina T. Boyce, District 43A
Delegate Frank M. Conway, Jr., District 40
Delegate Charlotte Cruikshank, District 19
Delegate Debra Davis, District 28
Delegate Diana M. Fennell, District 47A
Delegate Kevin M. Harris, District 27A
Delegate Andrea Fletcher Harrison, District 24
Delegate Shaneka Henson, District 30A
Delegate Terri L. Hill, District 12
Delegate Marvin E. Holmes, Jr., District 23
Delegate Julian Ivey, District 47A
Delegate Carl Jackson, District 8
Delegate Andre V. Johnson, Jr., District 34A
Delegate Adrienne A. Jones, District 10
Delegate Jazz Lewis, District 24
Delegate Robbyn Lewis, District 46
Delegate Ashanti Martinez, District 22
Delegate Aletheia McCaskill, District 44B
Delegate Bernice Mireku-North, District 14
Delegate Edith J. Patterson, District 28
Delegate Joseline Peña-Melnyk, District 21
Delegate N. Scott Phillips, District 10
Delegate Pamela Queen, District 14
Delegate Kent Roberson, District 25
Delegate Denise G. Roberts, District 25
Delegate Mike Rogers, District 32
Delegate Malcolm P. Ruff, District 41
Delegate Gary Simmons, District 12B
Delegate Dani Tavaras, District 47B
Delegate Kym Taylor, District 23
Delegate Veronica Turner, District 26
Delegate Jennifer White Holland, District 10
Delegate Nicole A. Williams, District 22
Delegate C.T. Wilson, District 28
Delegate Greg Wims, District 39
Delegate Caylin Young, District 45

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

The Legislative Black Caucus of Maryland offers its strong and favorable support for House Bill 311 (HB311) / Senate Bill 648 (SB648) – Medical Parole Reform. This legislation removes the requirement for gubernatorial approval in granting medical parole to individuals serving life sentences, ensuring that the Maryland Parole Commission can make timely decisions based on medical necessity rather than political influence. HB311/SB648 is a critical step toward a more just and compassionate criminal justice system, allowing incarcerated individuals who are terminally ill or severely debilitated to receive medical care in a more humane setting.

The impact of this legislation is particularly significant for Black Marylanders, who are disproportionately incarcerated and more likely to suffer from chronic health conditions such as heart disease, diabetes, and hypertension. Incarceration often worsens these conditions due to inadequate healthcare and the stress of long-term confinement. Without accessible medical parole, many Black individuals serving life sentences are left to suffer in prison with little recourse, even when they no longer pose any risk to public safety. HB311/SB648 ensures that those facing severe, life-threatening illnesses are given the opportunity to receive proper medical treatment in appropriate healthcare facilities or with family support, restoring dignity to those who might otherwise endure unnecessary suffering.

By removing gubernatorial approval from the medical parole process, HB311/SB648 eliminates an unnecessary bureaucratic barrier that has disproportionately impacted Black individuals seeking compassionate release. This reform upholds the principles of fairness and justice while also alleviating financial strain on the state by reducing the costs associated with incarcerating individuals with serious medical conditions. Furthermore, it allows families to provide care and support to their loved ones in their final days, strengthening Black communities that have been disproportionately affected by mass incarceration.

For these reasons, the Legislative Black Caucus of Maryland strongly supports HB311/SB648.

Legislative Black Caucus of Maryland