



## Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland

### Testimony in Support of HB 1123- Correctional Services - Medical and Elder Parole

TO: Delegate Luke Clippinger, Chair, and Members of the House Judiciary Committee  
FROM: Karen "Candy" Clark,  
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The state-wide Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland asks for a favorable vote for **HB 1123 - Correctional Services - Medical and Elder Parole**. The purpose of **Bill 1123** is to allow a person who is at least 60 years old and who has already served a continuous time of 20 years or more in prison without major disciplinary infractions be considered for a medical parole—if all qualifications are present. Correctional research supports the concept that as people move up in age, they are far less likely to engage in a criminal lifestyle.

This bill requires a comprehensive assessment of the individual to assure—to the best of all means possible—that the individual is physically incapable of presenting a danger to society. Once that has been thoroughly determined, they may be released.

Especially noted as a release concern is the victim(s) with whom the individual was involved. In earlier years, the impact and needs of victims were ignored in our correctional system. However, their needs are now becoming an essential ingredient—if they choose to be involved. In many cases, involving the victim in this process can help them to recover from their trauma. This bill includes many of the steps that would need to be taken if the victim accepts that opportunity. For example- the victim could be asked to write a recommendation on the advisability of release of the individual and be allowed to meet with the professionals who are also involved in the work.

Recently, in Maryland, few have qualified for this opportunity to return to the outside (while still serving on parole with a case manager). Unfortunately, **only one person since 2015** has been able to have this chance. Currently, about 600 people qualify and should have the opportunity.

Also, the parole system is cheaper and can reduce the burden on the correctional facility expenses by \$28-50,000 per year, per person. The bill's savings would be reinvested into the system to help to make improvements, like the development of secondary education, workforce training programs and certification to help with participant's success as they return to a better life on the outside. I especially like this addition.

The Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry asks for your favorable response for **HB1123**

Thank you for your dedication.

*Karen Clark*

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