



**Maryland Developmental  
Disabilities Council**

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**House Judiciary Committee**

February 26, 2026

**HB 1154: Correctional Services – Restrictive Housing**

Position: Support

The Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council (DD Council), a statewide public policy organization that studies and analyzes issues that affect people with developmental disabilities and their impact, **supports efforts to better identify incarcerated people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD); and limits on restrictive housing, therefore we support HB 1154.**

In fact, over the last 5 years, one of the DD Council's priorities has been make sure people with developmental disabilities are appropriately supported in all parts of the criminal justice system. That includes advocating for improvements in policies and practices within Maryland's jails and prisons. **HB 1154 does just that by prohibiting restrictive housing for "vulnerable populations" including people with developmental disabilities.**

**WHY is this important?**

- **People with disabilities are overrepresented in jails and prisons across the country, but under identified in Maryland.** According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics, people in state and federal prisons are nearly three times as likely to report having a disability as the non-incarcerated population, while those in jails are more than four times as likely. Cognitive and intellectual disabilities are among the most commonly reported: **Prison inmates are four times as likely and jail inmates more than six times as likely to report a cognitive or intellectual disability as the general population.**
  - Maryland does not know how many people with intellectual and developmental disabilities are currently in the State's jails and prisons because Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services (DPSCS) practices and identification of disabilities vary among facilities.
- **Reports and research consistently find that restrictive housing is harmful, especially for people with disabilities.** In recognition that even short stays in solitary confinement can have severe and long-lasting consequences for people with disabilities numerous national organizations have adopted standards to limit segregation, including the National Commission on Correctional Health Care.
- **Segregation and restrictive housing can prevent individuals from accessing needed programs, treatment, and care.** It is also true that when people with disabilities do not get the accommodations they need, they are more likely to be segregated or put into restrictive housing.
- **Maryland overuses restrictive housing.** In FY2024, there were 13,910 placements into restrictive housing, a 25.6% in administrative segregation placements and a 38.4% increase in the use of disciplinary segregation. (December 2024 DPSCS Report on Restrictive Housing)

- A 2018 study conducted by the Association of State Correctional Administrators in conjunction with the Liman Center for Public Interest Law at Yale Law School found that Maryland ranked 7<sup>th</sup> out of 43 responding jurisdictions in their use of restrictive housing for at least 15 consecutive days.
- **Research shows that decreasing segregation and limiting the use of restrictive housing actually decreases prison infractions.** Colorado banned segregation for prisoners with serious mental illness and intellectual disabilities and offers 20 hours a week minimum out-of-cell time (10 structured, 10 unstructured). From 2015-2016, staff assaults reduced by half, and forced cell entries reduced by 79%.

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