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POSITION ON PROPOSED LEGISLATION

BILL: SB061, Division of Correction – Release Preparation Program

FROM: Maryland Office of the Public Defender

POSITION: FAVORABLE

DATE: January 28, 2026

The Maryland Office of the Public Defender respectfully requests that the Committee issue a favorable report on SB061.

Senate Bill 061 seeks to establish a Release Preparation Program ("the Program") to provide access to formerly incarcerated individuals to State correctional facilities in order to assist currently incarcerated individuals with release preparation. The Program proposed in this Bill will connect soon-to-be returning citizens with others who have personal experience successfully transitioning through release and re-entry. The Program will provide simple yet important assistance for returning citizens to help ensure a smooth transition back into the community.

Many incarcerated individuals—especially those who have served sentences that may span several decades—can struggle upon release without a strong support system. As public defenders, we see the practical challenges that returning citizens must navigate, oftentimes on their own, that can feel insurmountable. Having a support network prior to and upon release is an easy step that helps set up returning citizens for success. Receiving support and assistance from formerly incarcerated people is all the more meaningful, as these individuals can speak to their real experiences upon release and offer advice and insight that other supporters cannot. For these reasons, we urge a favorable report on SB061.