



Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland

Testimony in Support of SB 908- Correctional Services - Restrictive Housing

To: Senator Will Smith, Jr., Chair, Senator Jeff Waldstreicher, Vice-Chair, and
Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee
From: Karen “Candy” Clark, Lead Advocate Criminal Justice Reform
Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry-Maryland
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The Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland asks for a favorable vote on **SB 908 - Correctional Services - Restrictive Housing**. This bill aligns with our values of justice and equity, which call us to honor the inherent worth and dignity of all people, which includes those behind prison walls.

SB 908 is a seven-page bill that describes in great detail how people in “Restrictive Housing” need to be treated and cared for. It requires that ALL restrictive units create the least restrictive environment possible for the situations that occur. Details are clearly provided when adjustments need to be made for vulnerable people (ie: those who are pregnant, or physically- or mentally- challenged). It also provides specific guidelines to keep people safe, even when they are exhibiting behaviors that pose a risk to themselves or to others. Finally, it outlines the staff responsibilities (ie: managing officials, persons overseeing pregnancy or doctors overseeing health issues, etc), that are necessary to ensure there is no additional harm to the individual or those around them.

Restrictive housing has had a negative history of mistreating people, often by isolating them for an excessive amount of time. This bill addresses time constraints and implements U.N. recommended time limits (no longer than 15 consecutive days) for helping to maintain the person’s healthy mental state. Staff are responsible for timed record keeping and those in restrictive housing have regularly timed reports.

This is the kind of bill that you would want in place if one of your loved ones needed to be placed in restrictive housing. UULM-MD is especially glad to see the addition of the role of the ombudsman! We, along with many others, worked very hard to get it passed!!! Thank you for this humane bill.

Karen “Candy” Clark

Criminal Justice Reform Lead Advocate