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TESTIMONY ON HB 935 (Cross-filed with SB 187)
Comprehensive Rehabilitative Reentry Services – Female Incarcerated Individuals
April 2, 2026

The University of Maryland, Baltimore Center for Violence Prevention (CVP) strongly supports HB 935, which would require specific procurement processes for the construction of a prerelease facility for women, including comprehensive rehabilitative services. Currently, there are nine separate pre-release and minimum-security facilities in Maryland for men and not a single one for women. This further disenfranchises women who are involved with the justice system in our state. Those with pre-release status present the least risk of violence and have established an excellent record of acceptable behavior. Individuals who have been granted this status may have access to the community for work release and special leave, including compassionate leave and family leave. Currently, at the Maryland Correctional Institution for Women (MCIW), an estimated one in ten women have achieved pre-release status. Yet, there is nowhere for them to go to access services for assistance with transitioning back to civil society.

The Center for Violence Prevention is a community informed initiative of the University of Maryland, Baltimore in collaboration with the R Adams Cowley Shock Trauma Center at the University of Maryland Medical Center – the first of its kind. Our aim is to build resilient communities for all through the prevention and intervention of all forms of violence and trauma. We do this in an interdisciplinary, collaborative fashion where we conduct community-based participatory research, provide creative and impactful education, and inform and advocate for policies that strengthen our communities to prevent violence and trauma. Our support for this bill is aligned with the latter.

Women in Maryland are nearly two times more likely to be incarcerated for non-violent offenses than men (37% compared to 16%). Women serve 40% less time than men in our state. They need support for themselves and their families. The majority (75%) are the primary or sole caretakers of their children. As such, women have different needs when released from jails and prisons. Women at MCIW report feeling highly unprepared for re-entry, especially with respect to housing and employment. Reentry and rehabilitation programs that provide interpersonal skills, mentorship, and connections to positive social networks in addition to providing flexible financial support have proven to be successful. Developing interpersonal skills (e.g., time management, goal setting, and parenting) and targeting antisocial peer relationships are extremely important for successful reentry, because when these factors are neglected, women are more likely to experience post-release failure. Baltimore City bears a disproportionate burden of incarcerated and returning citizens, the proportion of justice-involved women in need of reentry and rehabilitation support is high. Placing the prerelease center for women in Baltimore City will both provide the needed services and supports but also ease the transition for these women back into the neighborhoods most of them originated from.

For these reasons, the UMB Center for Violence Prevention supports HB 935 and respectfully encourages a favorable report.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Nadine Finigan-Carr". The signature is fluid and cursive, written over a white background.

Nadine Finigan-Carr, PhD
Executive Director