



April 2nd 2026

SB187

**Correctional Services - Comprehensive Rehabilitative Prerelease Services - Female
Incarcerated Individuals**

Judiciary Appropriations Committee

Position: info only

The Maryland Catholic Conference (MCC) offers this testimony for INFO only of **Senate Bill 187**. The Maryland Catholic Conference (MCC) is the public policy representative of the three (arch)dioceses serving Maryland, which together encompass over one million Marylanders. Statewide, their parishes, schools, hospitals, and numerous charities combine to form our state's second largest social service provider network, behind only our state government.

Senate Bill 187 Correctional Services - Comprehensive Rehabilitative Prerelease Services Female Incarcerated Individuals the bill seeks to improve prerelease and reentry services for female incarcerated individuals by requiring the development of a dedicated prerelease facility, the implementation of gender-responsive and trauma-informed services, and the creation of comprehensive reentry plans. The bill also mandates that the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services implement these services by September 1, 2026, with oversight provided through reporting requirements and review by the Office of the Correctional Ombudsman.

The original intent of this legislation is both necessary and commendable. It recognizes that women in the correctional system often face unique challenges, including higher rates of trauma, caregiving responsibilities, and barriers to reintegration. By requiring access to services such as mental health care, substance use treatment, job training, family reunification support, and individualized reentry planning, the bill aims to reduce recidivism and support successful transitions back into society. These are critical components that not only benefit the individual but also strengthen families and communities across Maryland.

However, while the framework of the bill is strong, there are concerns regarding its implementation and the potential gaps that may limit its effectiveness. The requirement to implement comprehensive services by a set date is an important step, but without clearly defined enforcement mechanisms or guaranteed funding, there is a risk that these services may be delayed, inconsistently applied, or insufficient in scope. Additionally, the reliance on future procurement and construction processes for a prerelease facility may create further delays, leaving current incarcerated women without immediate access to the full range of services envisioned in the legislation. While oversight by the Correctional Ombudsman is included, the bill does not fully ensure accountability if agencies fail to meet timelines or standards.

These limitations have real consequences for communities. When reentry services are delayed or incomplete, individuals are more likely to return to unstable conditions without access to housing, employment, or health care—factors that are essential for successful reintegration. This not only impacts the individual but also places additional strain on families, many of whom rely on the returning individual for emotional and financial support. Communities ultimately bear the cost through increased recidivism, greater demand on social services, and diminished public safety outcomes. Without full and timely implementation, the promise of this legislation may fall short of addressing the urgent needs it seeks to resolve.

At its core, this bill reflects an important moral commitment to rehabilitation, dignity, and second chances. Catholic Social Teaching reminds us that every person, regardless of circumstance, possesses inherent dignity and the capacity for restoration. Providing meaningful reentry services is not only a matter of policy but a reflection of our responsibility to support healing, reunite families, and build stronger communities. I respectfully urge the Committee to strengthen provisions around implementation, accountability, and timely access to services to ensure that its full promise is realized and kept for the women and families who need it most.

For these reasons, I provide information only on **Senate Bill 187** that incarcerated women are given the tools and resources they need to build new lives in a timely and appropriate manner.