



**House Judiciary Committee
House Bill 935 – Correctional Services - Comprehensive
Rehabilitative Prerelease Services - Female Incarcerated
Individuals**

FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS

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The ACLU of Maryland supports HB 935 with amendments. HB 935 seeks to ensure that a women’s prerelease facility is built and that women who are eligible for prerelease can reside there and receive comprehensive gender-responsive services to prepare them for reentry. The Gender-Responsive Prerelease Act of 2020 was enacted in 2021, after the Maryland General Assembly overrode then-Governor Hogan’s veto. The 2020 bill required the prerelease center to open and provide services in 2023. However, that never happened due to delays of the previous administration. While we applaud the effort of Governor Moore’s administration to move this project forward, we urge the committee to collaborate with the Women’s Prerelease Equity Coalition (“Coalition”) to ensure that the center aligns with the needs of impacted women to the maximum extent possible.

The ACLU of Maryland supported the Coalition’s efforts to oppose the proposal by the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services (DPSCS) and the Department of General Services (DGS) to use the Forrest Street site for a women’s prerelease center. We appreciate DPSCS and DGS for meeting with the Coalition in November 2025 to discuss the significant concerns with this location, and for subsequently withdrawing the spending item from the Board of Public Works docket in December 2025 to allow for consideration of alternative sites. Women in prerelease should not be placed in an area where illicit drug activity is prevalent – nor should they be expected to receive services adjacent to the planned Baltimore Therapeutic and Treatment Center, which will primarily serve men for addiction and related needs. To give women in pre-release the strongest chance at success, the facility must be in a safe and stable location that provides meaningful access to employment opportunities and allows family members to stay connected.

We agree with the intent of HB 935 to ensure that the women's prerelease facility is not placed in close proximity to an existing correctional facility. However, as recently discussed with DPSCS and DGS, the one-mile radius in the bill significantly restricts viable options for the location of the prerelease center. **We respectfully ask the committee to work with the Coalition to revise the bill language to expand potential locations. We also urge the committee to collaborate with the Coalition on amendments to guarantee that all women in prerelease will receive their services at the new dedicated women's prerelease center – and not at any other correctional facility.**

In terms of the capacity of the prerelease center, the ACLU supports the parameters set in HB 935 – specifically, a facility size equal to 1.25 times the number of women at MCIW who were eligible for prerelease in 2024. According to DPSCS reports, this would equal 93 beds.

We support the bill's requirement that DPSCS develop a comprehensive plan to provide gender responsive prerelease services by September 2026. This is critically important given that the Gender-Responsive Prerelease Act required these services to be provided in 2023, along with the opening of the facility. With the facility now not expected to open for several years, many impacted women – although they received some services at MCIW – have not fully benefitted from comprehensive gender-responsive supports envisioned by the law. **To define what comprehensive gender-responsive services should include, we ask the committee to amend the bill to ensure that this planning process is a collaborative effort among DPSCS, the Coalition, and other impacted women.**

Too many women have served their time without being given the strongest chance at successful reentry. Maryland must follow through with its promise. We urge the committee to pass HB 935 and work with the Coalition to incorporate the amendments outlined above.