



MARYLAND
CATHOLIC
CONFERENCE

March 3rd, 2026
HB935

**Correctional Services - Comprehensive Rehabilitative Prerelease Services - Female
Incarcerated Individuals
Judiciary Committee
Position: Favorable**

The Maryland Catholic Conference (MCC) offers this testimony in support of **House Bill 935**. 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.

House Bill 935 Correctional Services - Comprehensive Rehabilitative Prerelease Services Female Incarcerated Individuals the bill updates and strengthens prerelease services for female incarcerated individuals by establishing requirements for a comprehensive, gender-responsive prerelease facility. It directs the Department of General Services to oversee procurement for the construction of the facility and requires the Commissioner of Correction to ensure that gender-responsive rehabilitative services are available. The bill further mandates the implementation of comprehensive prerelease services—including education, workforce development, mental health care, and reentry support—by **September 1, 2026**, to better prepare women for successful reintegration into their communities.

The Catholic Church has long upheld the belief that our justice system must serve not only to hold individuals accountable but also to offer them opportunities for rehabilitation and restoration. Access to education, vocational training, mental health care, and family reunification services is essential for women reentering society, many of whom have experienced domestic violence, caregiving disruptions, and economic instability. This legislation recognizes those realities and responds with a rehabilitative approach that prioritizes healing, stability, and long-term success.

As Catholics, we believe deeply in the redemptive power of God's mercy and the importance of second chances. The Gospel calls us to visit and care for those who are imprisoned (Matthew 25:36), reminding us that their dignity does not diminish because of incarceration. Establishing a dedicated prerelease facility for women is more than a policy decision—it is an affirmation of human dignity and a meaningful investment in restorative justice that benefits individuals, families, and communities alike.

Women in correctional facilities often face distinct challenges, including histories of trauma, family separation, and limited access to gender-responsive rehabilitative services. Many

are also mothers, and ensuring their successful transition back into society directly impacts the well-being of their children and families. As Pope Francis has emphasized, “A just and necessary punishment must never exclude the dimension of hope and the goal of rehabilitation.”¹

For these reasons, I urge you to support **House Bill 935** that incarcerated women are given the tools and resources they need to build new lives.

¹ Pope Francis, Address to United States Congress, September 24, 2015.