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March 3, 2026

TO: The Honorable J. Sandy Bartlett
Chair, Judiciary Committee

FROM: Tiffany Clark
Director, Legislative Affairs, Office of the Attorney General

RE: House Bill 467 – Correctional Services – Maryland Parole Commission –
Improvements in Transparency and Equity (Support)

The Office of the Attorney General (OAG) supports House Bill 467, Correctional Services – Maryland Parole Commission – Improvements in Transparency and Equity. HB 467 strengthens transparency, procedural fairness, and equity in the Maryland Parole Commission's operations by requiring race-disaggregated reporting, pre-hearing document disclosure, public accountability for individual commissioner votes and reasoning, mandatory hearing recordings, and defined intervals for parole rehearings.

This legislation directly supports our efforts to advance equitable justice and build public confidence in Maryland's criminal justice system. The OAG has long recognized that transparency and accountability in parole decision-making are essential to ensuring that the system operates fairly and that disparities, whether in grant rates, denial reasons, or hearing frequency, can be identified and addressed. The bill's requirements align closely with the recommendations of the Maryland Equitable Justice Collaborative (MEJC), particularly Recommendation #10, which calls for enhancing transparency, consistency, and efficacy in Parole Commission decisions and which reflects the OAG's own commitments to equitable outcomes in the criminal justice system.

Several provisions are particularly important, including:

- **Pre-hearing document disclosure.** Incarcerated individuals will receive copies of the documents the Commission will rely upon, rather than merely being permitted to

examine them on request — a meaningful improvement to the fairness of the hearing process.

- **Public commissioner reasoning.** Each commissioner's individual reasoning must be made public, not just the vote itself, creating real accountability for decisions that carry significant consequences for incarcerated individuals and public safety alike.
- **Prohibition on permanent parole denial and mandatory rehearing intervals.** These provisions address a documented and troubling trend: parole hearings in Maryland fell from 2,067 in 2018 to just 784 in 2021, and grant rates have declined as well. Defined rehearing schedules ensure that parole-eligible individuals receive regular, meaningful consideration of their cases.
- **Race-disaggregated reporting.** Annual data broken down by race will enable the General Assembly, the Commission, and the public to identify and address systemic disparities in parole outcomes — a critical step toward ensuring the system lives up to its equitable promise.

We appreciate the General Assembly's work on this important policy and welcome the opportunity to share our perspective. For the foregoing reasons, the Office of the Attorney General respectfully urges the Committee to give HB 467 a favorable report.

Cc: Members of the Committee