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OVERRIDE THE VETO

SUPPORT WOMEN'S PRE-RELEASE FACILITIES: Senate Bill 684/House Bill 801

Establish stand-alone pre-release centers for incarcerated women in Maryland and increase programming to facilitate successful reintegration back into society.

THE CHALLENGE

- Pre-release facilities are designed to prepare individuals to seamlessly reintegrate into society after incarceration.
- Currently, there are more than five (5) pre-release facilities in Maryland that are specific to men. Zero (0) facilities exist for women.
- In 2009, Maryland closed the only state-wide and stand-alone women's pre-release center and relocated all pre-release services to the Maryland Correctional Institute for Women (MCI-W).
- Under the Maryland Women Pre-Release Unit Code Annotated 3-303, it is the commissioner's duty to provide rehabilitative pre-release services to develop, implement, assist, and make sure the unique needs of women are met. However, due to an **overcrowded system at MCIW, most women are released without obtaining educational, wellness, or substance abuse help.**
- Most women in prison (75%) are mothers of minor children. And nearly 42% of all mothers are the sole/primary financial supports for their family before incarceration. This percentage is much larger among African American mothers (66.9%).
- Without a pre-release center to grant access to vital skills and training provided through work release programs, women cannot successfully reintegrate back into society and support their families.

CURRENT POLICY

- Maryland currently operates multiple dedicated pre-release and minimum-security facilities for men, and none (0) for women.
- At MCI-W, women on pre-release status are co-housed with women on maximum security status.
- Women on pre-release have expressed fear for their safety as they try to focus on their re-entry plans (a violent encounter with another inmate can prevent the release of someone on pre-release status).

THE SOLUTION: OVERRIDE THE VETO

- The vetoed legislation would provide for the establishment of community-based pre-release facilities for women will provide access to vital job skills and training provides through work release programs and other supports.
- Override the veto to eliminate barriers to successful reentry for women by establishing community-based pre-release facilities to more effectively meet the needs of Maryland's women navigating pre-release status.

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