



Maryland
Justice
Project

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB0608

Correctional Services - Pre-release Unit for Women

To: Chairman Luke Clippenger and Members of the House Judiciary Committee

From: Vonunette Allen Maryland Justice Project, Volunteer

Date: 2/12/2020

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing this letter in reference to the women at MCIW not having a pre-release facility. I am a former inmate who was released in August 2014. I was unprepared to transition back into society. Things had changed from 2005 to 2014 according to technology. I didn't have any computer training in order to fill out any applications. I was at a disadvantage at that point and basically setup for failure. The employment information that I had was from Patuxent Institution when I was an inmate there.

There was no transitional anything!! At least with a pre-release facility I would have at least have a fighting chance. I didn't know anything about how to get a job or even find employment. I didn't know how to seek housing, how to catch public transportation and how to be independent. I didn't know how to budget my finances or even how to open up a bank account.

When the pre-release facility was open, they taught all these things and how to be self-sufficient. They prepared you for the obstacles that an ex-offender face on a daily basis. Ms. Chippendale was the pre-release facility administrator and made sure the programs were there; however, as the warden of MCIW you're released with the mentality of being institutionalized. Meaning you don't know how to transition back into society.

Thank you in advance for your time and cooperation with this matter.

Respectfully,

Ms. Vonunette Allen