

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF BILL #HB1476

Independent Oversight and Review Board for Health Care of Inmates in State Correctional Facilities-Establishment

03/06/2020

From: Michael E. Gerlach, Maryland Prisoners Rights Coalition (MPRC)

To: Chairman Luke Clippinger, Madame Chair Vanessa Atterbeary and Members of the House Judiciary Committee

Re: SUPPORT FOR BILL#HB1476

Distinguished members of the Judiciary Committee:

As a person who has a loved one who is incarcerated, this bill is extremely important to me. I see how her health has deteriorated from the lack of adequate medical treatment that she has received while incarcerated.

The things that she has told me would be grounds for malpractice, if she was to receive the same kind of treatment on the outside. From being prescribed the wrong medications to being denied proper dental care because the equipment was malfunctioning in their building and then being told that they would not take her to the dentist at another facility until there were enough people to warrant taking them to that dentist are just a few examples of what she has had to deal with due to how they administer health care in the facility where she is located. "As a result of the denial of dental care, she had to suffer through a terrible toothache for over 10 days and on top of that, again, she was not given any type of medication to ease the pain that she was enduring due to the toothache.

Other stories of women who have had their kidneys damaged during exploratory surgery to the denial of mental health care because staff, who are not qualified medical providers, have made the determination that they didn't think they needed care because they didn't seem to be "crazy" enough to get an appointment. These are just some of the heinous actions that go on as a result of the current way that health care is being provided in Maryland correctional facilities.

We are not asking for special treatment because they are incarcerated, we are just asking that the care that they are currently being given be changed to reflect the same care as anyone would be GIVEN BY ANY OTHER MEDICAL PROFESSIONAL ON THE outside. That is not too much to ask.

Please give a favorable vote for HB 1476 to bring the Maryland State prisons up from the Dark Ages to the 21st century with regards to providing health care to our loved ones who are incarcerated.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael E. Gerlach