

Bill No: HB003
Title: Parole Reform
Committee: Judiciary/Judicial Proceedings
Hearing Date: January 18, 2021



Position: SUPPORT

Interfaith Action for Human Rights believes that the Governor should not play a role in the parole process in Maryland. We urge a favorable report on this bill.

IAHR represents people of faith who educate and advocate in Maryland, DC and Virginia for corrections systems that avoid unnecessarily punitive practices and that instead focus on rehabilitation and successful reentry and that honors the dignity of each individual.

We support this bill because it would decrease the number of individuals who remain incarcerated but who have been approved for parole by the Maryland Parole Commission but who the Governor refuses to grant parole.

Maryland is one of only three states that includes the Governor in its decisions to grant parole. The politicization of the process gives the Governor far too much power in making these decisions; it leaves the Maryland Parole Commission essentially powerless. From Governor Glendening's declaration that "life means life" in 1994 to Governor Hogan's refusal to parole lifers approved by the Maryland Parole Commission today, denying parole to lifers has been based on the false and offensive narrative that these individuals cannot be rehabilitated.

We are Maryland residents, taxpaying constituents of the members of this Judicial Proceedings Committee. We believe that these individuals should be granted parole after being promised true and meaningful consideration at parole. These individuals are being resentenced de facto to death by incarceration. It is past time to change this practice.

Interfaith Action for Human Rights strongly urge the passage of this parole reform bill.

Respectfully submitted,
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