

## **Bill No: HB 131**

Title: **Correctional Services – Step–Down Programs – Cause of Action**

Committee: Judiciary

Hearing Date: January 27, 2021

### **Position: SUPPORT**

*cannot imagine what it would be like to be in solitary confinement – restrictive housing or whatever we call it – and we are now almost a year into a lockdown situation where men and women have been living inside the equivalent of a one-car garage for 23 hours a day. My pen-pals who are incarcerated in this situation say that they are starved for human contact ! They tell me the isolation is worse than the bad-tasting food, the thin hard mattress, and the toilet smells from the privy in their cells.*

*Imagine: As Maryland citizens, we are complaining about what we can't do under the pandemic and we are 10,000-times-more-stimulated and able to learn and improve ourselves than our compatriots behind bars. It is true that people who made mistakes need to be held accountable but long term solitary confinement (as we have it now) is counterproductive.*

*Even worse is the lack of a transition for people who leave Solitary and return to the community. Please support HB 131 that mandates the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services to provide transitional services to incarcerated people in six months prior to their release. The bill requires the DPSCS to introduce a “step down” program to those incarcerated in restrictive housing as well as involving a coordinated multidisciplinary treatment team approach.*

*Over the last five years, the Department released anywhere from 250 to 300 people directly to the community from restrictive housing without any form of step-down transition. This practice poses a threat to public safety and undermines the chances of incarcerated people to reenter the community successfully.*

*This is why we need HB131. It will help the transition out of solitary confinement to prepare for a successful re-entry. That is critical to reduce recidivism and for the safety of our communities.*

*As a member of the Interfaith Alliance for Human Rights and as a Maryland citizen, I look forward to supporting your efforts to make this HB131 a reality.*

*Yours truly,  
Lucy Steinitz*

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