



HB1112 - Task Force to Study Health Care for Inmates in Correctional Facilities
Presented to Hon. Luke Clippinger and Members of the House Judiciary Committee
March 12, 2019 1:00 p.m.

POSITION: SUPPORT

NARAL Pro-Choice Maryland **urges the House Judiciary Committee a favorable report on HB1112** - Task Force to Study Health Care for Inmates in Correctional Facilities, sponsored by Delegate Jazz Lewis. We believe this legislation has the potential to help improve the sexual and reproductive care received by inmates in correctional facilities by identifying the areas which need improvement.

Our organization is an advocate for reproductive health, rights, and justice. We strongly support strategies to improve and maintain the sexual and reproductive healthcare of inmates and detainees in any type of facility across the state. HB1112 will enable the State of Maryland to improve the current scope of healthcare policies by establishing a task force to review policies and make recommendations on how they can expand and adequately meet the needs of all those in the care/custody/control of the state through the life span.

We are interested in the task force as a means to assist in the implementation of laws that went into effect last October thanks to the advocacy of the statewide coalition, Reproductive Justice Inside. SB0589 and SB0629 created policies to ensure fair and adequate access to menstrual hygiene products, as well as clear policies that guide the timely healthcare needs and services for pregnant and post-pregnant inmates and detainees. In our research leading to the 2018 Maryland General Assembly session, we found very limited number of guidelines and policies surrounding the treatment of pregnant inmates. Many counties had no specific policies, such as good risk management practices for addressing high risk pregnancies. If facilities are struggling with identifying the quality protocols and practices, the task force would have the power to investigate this issue and recommend a remedy. All inmates have the right to receive timely and quality sexual and reproductive healthcare. Being given inadequate care is not a part of an inmate's sentence.

HB1112 stipulates that the taskforce must include representatives of various groups such as Disability Rights Maryland and Maryland Prisoners' Rights Coalition. This will ensure that the varying medical needs of prisoners are kept in mind when policies are being reviewed. If these voices were not present, it would be possible that the needs of certain prisoners would be overlooked simply due to a lack of awareness of the realities that the inmates face inside. The strength of this task force will be due to its diverse membership.

We strongly support the creation of the Task Force to Study Health Care for Inmates in Correctional Facilities. It will improve understanding of the current state of sexual and reproductive healthcare services in the various facilities across the state, provide solutions to combat issues and policy challenges, and help protect the reproductive futures and freedom of those inside. For these reasons, **NARAL Pro-Choice Maryland urges a favorable report on HB1112**. Thank you for your time and consideration.