



REPRODUCTIVE JUSTICE INSIDE

c/o NPCMF

1323 N. Calvert Street – Suite A

Baltimore, MD 21202

<http://www.rjinside.org>

SB 973 - Joint Committee on Ending Homelessness

Reports on Housing Status

Senator Mary Washington,

Reproductive Justice Inside (RJI) and our coalition members and partners stand in support of SB 973. RJI is Maryland's only statewide coalition working to address the needs of systems-involved individuals and their access to quality and timely sexual and reproductive healthcare and the right to parent with dignity.

This legislation will provide a mechanism for advocates and state officials to understand an issue that we have grappled with for years. When someone is released, there is only a cursory conversation and effort to address their housing situation. They can be released to a homeless shelter or a community-based program but those are short-term options and there is no plan beyond that.

The ability to access stable permanent housing is perhaps one of the greatest barriers facing individuals upon their release from incarceration. This is particularly acute for women who are released as there is both an expectation and desire to return to their children and families. Without stable housing, employment is difficult to obtain. Without housing you cannot get a job as you are worried about where you will lay your head – Without employment you cannot get housing – a vicious cycle that contributes in no small part to our rates of reentry to the criminal justice system.

This legislation will shine a bright light on an issue that has gone unaddressed for too long. It will allow us to understand the complex intersection of reentry, housing and recidivism. This information will provide a clear picture of the need and an opportunity for reform.

Simply put, SB 973 is good legislation and the Reproductive Justice Inside Coalition, its members and allies urge your support and favorable report.

Respectfully submitted,

Kimberly Haven
Reproductive Justice Inside
Coalition Coordinator