



STATE OF MARYLAND

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR  
**Wes Moore**

May 22, 2026

The Honorable Bill Ferguson  
President of the Senate of Maryland  
H-107 State House  
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear President Ferguson,

In accordance with Article II, Section 17(c) of the Maryland Constitution, I will allow Senate Bill 187 - *Correctional Services - Comprehensive Rehabilitative Prerelease Services - Female Incarcerated Individuals (Monica Cooper Prerelease Act)* - to be enacted without my signature.

The Gender-Responsive Prerelease Act (SB 684 Chapter 16, 2020) was passed in March 2020, as an unfunded mandate and became law in February 2021 through a veto override. The Hogan Administration delayed implementation which resulted in the design and site selection phase of this project occurring during the Moore-Miller Administration. In Spring of 2025, 717 Forrest St, Baltimore, was chosen out of 16 potential sites considered by DGS based on availability and meeting all criteria specified in the law and at the cost most advantageous to the project. Due to concerns regarding crime in the area, the number of beds, and lack of green space voiced by legislators and advocates, the Moore-Miller Administration placed the project on hold in Winter of 2025 to go back to the table to consider additional sites with input from advocates.

Senate Bill 187 reclassifies the prerelease unit for women within the Division of Correction as a “prerelease facility” for women who have prerelease status. This facility will also serve women who are within 36 months of their anticipated release date, and adds women who are minimum security status, which will require the women to be housed within a secured perimeter, including a fence surrounding the correctional facility, a sallyport, and rovers or towers. This legislation requires the new prerelease facility to accommodate no fewer than 1.25 times the maximum number of women at the Maryland Correctional Institution for Women who were eligible for prerelease status in calendar year 2023 as reported by the Department of Public Safety and

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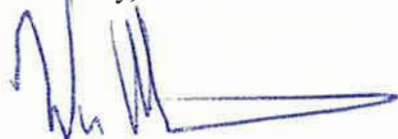
Correctional Services' (DPSCS) October 2024 report to the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee and House Appropriations Committee. The average number of incarcerated women in prelease classification was 82 in 2023, multiplied by 1.25 results in a 102 bed count for the prerelease facility. The prerelease facility for women must be located in Baltimore City on a site that is not less than three acres in land area and not located within one-half mile of any existing correctional facility. This facility must also be able to accommodate the administration, housing, programming, and provide trauma informed and gender responsive services for the women at the facility.

DPSCS is required to identify a location, acquire property, and design a site plan for the facility by October 1, 2027, or no later than six months thereafter; begin construction or renovation of the facility by July 1, 2028, or no later than six months thereafter; complete the construction or renovation by March 1, 2031, or no later than six months thereafter; and begin operating and providing services in the facility by September 1, 2031, or no later than six months thereafter. The Department of General Services (DGS) must submit a timeline of deliverables for the planning, design, and construction of the facility to the Senate Budget and Tax Committee, the House Appropriation Committee, and the Office of the Correctional Ombudsman.

The Moore-Miller Administration will work to meet the requirements laid out in Senate Bill 187 but are not in lockstep on the approach required in the legislation. The changes that have been made in Senate Bill 187 require DPSCS and DGS to build a new minimum security correctional facility to house women. This is a distinct departure from the facility envisioned in 2021. We need to ensure that this new direction works with our shared goal of ending mass incarceration and is the most effective path towards rehabilitation.

Pieces of this legislation are innovative while others require DPSCS and DGS to duplicate work that they have already completed, and create additional restrictions providing these women the care they deserve. It is not clear these restrictions, duplications and timelines are feasible. I question whether the state can identify a new site that meets the existing and new requirements under this bill. While I support the intent of this legislation, I fear it may unnecessarily delay the additional rehabilitation services we all want to put into place. I look forward to engaging with partners in the legislature and advocates to chart a path forward towards our shared goals. For these reasons, Senate Bill 187 will go into effect without my signature.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Wes Moore', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Wes Moore

Governor