



## Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland

*Shared Voices for Liberal Religious Values in Maryland*

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### Testimony in **Support** of HB 1001 Restrictive Housing - Reporting by Correctional Units and Requirements Relating to Minors

TO: Chairman Clippinger, and the members of the House Judiciary Committee

FROM: Candy Clark, Restorative Justice Chair, Unitarian Universalist Legislative  
Ministry of Maryland

DATE: March 12, 2019

Good afternoon, Chairman Clippinger and Committee Members:

I am Candy Clark speaking on behalf of the Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of MD. As faith group we support legislation that relates to our principles. Our second principle calls for the use of compassion, equity and justice in our human relationships. This principle compels us to advocate for HB 1001 - Restrictive Housing - Reporting by Correctional Units and Requirements Relating to Minors

In 2016, President Obama ended juvenile solitary confinement in Federal prisons because of its “potential for devastating, lasting psychological consequences.” There are many damaging reports on its lasting physical and psychological effects on young developing minds. Consequently, many states have been moving to eliminate or reduce their restrictive housing practices for their juveniles. For example, in 2016 California Governor Jerry Brown signed a bill restricting the practice for juveniles. In North Carolina their correctional system announced it would no longer place inmates under age 18 in solitary. Instead, the state began to use treatment, rather than punishment, for young offenders.

We, in Maryland, need to also be more humane and incorporate principles of compassion and justice to this issue. HB 1001 moves in this direction. Maryland's juvenile system currently does emphasize various layers of treatment before it requires that a juvenile be placed into a facility. This law allows the use of solitary only when there is convincing evidence that the minor poses a serious immediate risk of self-harm, or harm to others, or to the security of the facility. HB 1001 also establishes that personal restrictions usually applied to adults in restrictive housing, are greatly reduced and the youth is given access to privileges such phone calls, visits, mail, showers, etc. creating a less punitive environment. Daily assessments of the juvenile's mental and physical health are also required.

The Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry asks for your support of HB 1001 as it promotes the treatment of our juveniles with compassion and justice as they navigate this experience.

Respectfully submitted,

Candy Clark

Restorative Justice Task Force Chair