



Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland

Shared Voices for Liberal Religious Values in Maryland

Testimony in **Support** of HB 745 Correctional Facilities - Restrictive Housing - Pregnant Inmates

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

I am Candy Clark and am speaking for the Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of MD in support HB 745. Our faith group selects bills that align with our principles. HB 745 strongly connects with our first principle: We affirm the inherent worth and dignity of all people, including those incarcerated. This is a human rights issue. It should go without saying that a woman should not be involuntarily placed into medical isolation, infirmary, or Restrictive Housing for the sole reason that she is pregnant. The bill does allow for the possibility that it may be appropriate under specific circumstances to place the woman in Restrictive Housing. These situations are clearly spelled out which involve the possibility of physical harm and flight risk. Her condition is to be assessed every 8 hours and she is to be housed in the least restrictive setting possible. Her rights related to her housing location, infirmary, medical isolation, or restrictive housing are clearly stated.

The details of this comprehensive five-page bill thoroughly address all imaginable situations that may occur during pregnancy in prison. The women's health, safety, and plans for unexpected events are included. The people who are responsible and accountable to her are specified and their tasks identified.

What is deplorable is that it is necessary for us to have to ask for this kind of treatment from our Correctional System. Again, this is a human right issue and the necessity of this bill implies that there is a climate of punitive and insensitive treatment. So let's make it right and move towards being smart on crime, not just tough on crime. The Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry asks for a favorable report on this bill.

Respectfully submitted,

Candy Clark
Restorative Justice Task Force Chair