

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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The logo for Safe & Just Michigan is a blue rectangle with the text "Safe & Just" in white, bold, sans-serif font, and "Michigan" in a smaller, white, sans-serif font below it.

Safe & Just
Michigan

Statement from Safe & Just Michigan Policy Advocacy Manager Jazmine Wells on the House Criminal Justice Committee voting Senate Bill 599 (improving medically frail parole) to the House floor on June 18, 2024:

“Safe & Just Michigan is grateful that the House Criminal Justice Committee voted today to move Senate Bill 599 forward to the House Floor without any votes in opposition. SB 599 fixes technical problems existing in the 2019 Medically Frail Parole statute that resulted in just one person being paroled under the statute in the past five years. Safe & Just Michigan supports SB 599 because it will empower the parole board and Michigan Department of Corrections (MDOC) to send medically frail people to facilities like hospitals, nursing homes, hospices or home care better suited to their needs. It also frees up MDOC resources, allowing it to focus on its core mission and to save millions of dollars by shifting substantial medical care costs from Michigan’s General Fund to Medicaid.

“People who qualify for medically frail parole are, by definition, terminally ill or profoundly mentally or physically incapacitated. Based on their medical condition alone, they do not pose a threat to the public. In addition, medically frail parole is a discretionary process on the part of the parole, which is routinely trusted to make informed parole decisions. The board would also have the authority to mitigate concerns about a person’s mobility by authorizing the use of a tether or other conditions of release, if deemed necessary.

“Left unaddressed, the medically frail population in Michigan prisons and the challenges they present will continue to grow. By 2026, 20 percent of the people in MDOC custody will be 55-years-old or older. The expense to incarcerated older people are 3-5 times higher than the costs for younger incarcerated people. These resources are better invested in areas such as in-prison programming, vocational training, and re-entry support services.

“We hope the House will take action to pass SB 599 quickly. It would provide a needed pathway to medical care for the medically frail population incarcerated in our prisons, help alleviate

MDOC health care and correctional officer staffing concerns, and free up MDOC resources for education, job training, re-entry services and other programs that result in better outcomes for the rest of the prison population.”

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Safe & Just Michigan (www.safeandjustmi.org) works to advance policies that end Michigan’s over-use of incarceration and promote community safety and healing. We partner with Michigan organizations and leaders from across the political spectrum, including business and community leaders, faith communities, crime survivor organizations, formerly incarcerated individuals, prisoners and their families, as well as Michigan taxpayers statewide.