

Maryland Alliance for Justice Reform

Working together for a criminal justice system that better serves our communities



To: Chair Sandy Bartlet and Judiciary Committee members
From: Bill Carlson and Jenny Zito, MAJR Executive Committee
Subject: UNF - HB0527 - Correctional Services - Home Detention - Removal

March 3, 2026

The Maryland Alliance for Justice Reform (MAJR) asks you to oppose HB 0527, which would compel the Commissioner of Correction (or designee) to remove an incarcerated individual from home detention for **any** violation of the conditions of the program, which would result in the individual being returned to incarceration.

Current law allows the commissioner to remove someone from the program for **any reason at any time**. Changing the law to *force* the commissioner to remove someone is unwise for a number of reasons:

1. The proposed change does not take into account the seriousness of the violation or any underlying circumstances that might cause a minor or even unintentional violation. Examples might include bad weather, miscommunication or misunderstanding, illness of the individual being monitored or of a family member/loved one, issues in the home environment, malfunctioning monitoring equipment, or bad traffic. For comparison, in violation of probation matters, Maryland law distinguishes between “technical violations,” which could be unintentional – such as minimal lateness in reporting or inability to pay fees – and substantive violations, such as commission of a new offense during supervision. Technical violations may have nothing to do with public safety.
2. It is likely that the commissioner already has an appropriate set of lesser actions they can take in response to minor violations—for example, extension of required time on supervision.
3. Home detention is used after an incarcerated person has already served their minimum sentence and provides significant benefit to public safety by integrating the person back into society and family life. So, this benefit should not be automatically canceled for minimal or unintended violations.

The Maryland Alliance for Justice Reform (MAJR) is a nonpartisan, all-volunteer organization of nearly 2000 Marylanders who advocate for sensible evidence-based legislative and policy changes in Maryland's correctional practices. MAJR thanks you for the opportunity to provide input on this legislation and urges the committee to give HB 0527 an unfavorable report.

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