

# THE MARYLAND PAROLE COMMISSION



## Fiscal Year 2018 Annual Report

Larry Hogan

Governor

Boyd K. Rutherford

Lieutenant Governor

Stephen T. Moyer

Secretary

David R. Blumberg

Chairman

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## Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services

### Office of the Secretary

300 E. JOPPA ROAD • SUITE 1000 • TOWSON, MARYLAND 21286-3020  
(410) 339-5000 • FAX (410) 339-4240 • TOLL FREE (877) 379-8636 • V/TTY (800) 735-2258 • [www.dpscs.maryland.gov](http://www.dpscs.maryland.gov)

STATE OF MARYLAND

LARRY HOGAN  
GOVERNOR

November 5, 2018

BOYD K. RUTHERFORD  
LT. GOVERNOR

STEPHEN T. MOYER  
SECRETARY

The Honorable Lawrence J. Hogan  
Governor of the State of Maryland  
100 State Circle  
Annapolis, Maryland  
2140-1925

WILLIAM G. STEWART  
DEPUTY SECRETARY  
ADMINISTRATION

J. MICHAEL ZEIGLER  
DEPUTY SECRETARY  
OPERATIONS

Dear Governor Hogan:

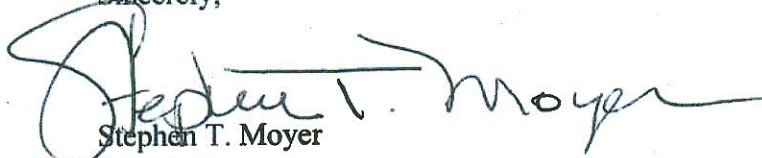
I am pleased to submit the Annual Report for the Maryland Parole Commission highlighting the agency's activities for Fiscal Year 2018. The report provides an overview of the agency and an overview of the functioning units.

As you know, the Maryland Parole Commission works closely with agencies such as the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services Division of Correction and the Division of Parole and Probation by sharing pertinent to assist in the decision making process for parole grants and revocation hearings.

With the assistance of risk assessment instruments, The Commission strives to meet the departmental objectives of paroling the most suitable candidates as close to parole eligibility as possible without compromising public safety in the process.

Thank you for your continuous support.

Sincerely,



Stephen T. Moyer  
Secretary

STM/js





## Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services

### Maryland Parole Commission

6776 REISTERSTOWN ROAD • SUITE 307 • BALTIMORE, MARYLAND 21215-2343  
(410) 585-3200 • FAX (410) 764-4355 • TOLL FREE (877) 241-5428 • [www.dpscs.maryland.gov](http://www.dpscs.maryland.gov)

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CHAIRMAN

The Honorable Secretary Moyer  
Maryland Department of Public Safety and Correctional Service  
Maryland Parole Commission  
300 Joppa Road, Suite 1000  
Towson, MD 21286

Dear Secretary Moyer,

It is with great pleasure that I present to you the Maryland Parole Commission Annual Report for Fiscal Year 2018.

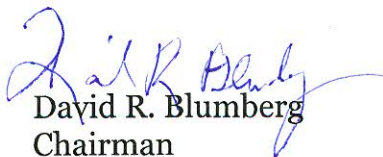
The report provides an overview of the agency, highlights of some of the administrative accomplishments, and outlines each functioning unit with its responsibilities.

During this reporting period, the Commission was able to perform satisfactorily under each managing for results objective while implementing new guidelines under the Justice Reinvestment Act.

The commitment and dedication of the staff at the Commission makes it possible to operate in an efficient and effective manner to meet the organizational objectives without jeopardizing the safety of the citizens of the State of Maryland.

The Commission will continue to exercise good judgement on conjunction with the other factors involved in the decision making process for the best possible parole outcomes.

Sincerely,

  
David R. Blumberg  
Chairman

## MISSION STATEMENT

The Maryland Parole Commission aims to provide offenders with timely parole and revocation hearings, strives to promote safe communities by promptly processing retake warrants, uses sound judgment in conjunction with utilizing validated risk assessment tools during the decision making process, encourages victim input when applicable, maintains strong relationships with other criminal justice agencies, allows access to the general public and releases those offenders who have the potential to become law abiding citizens.





## OVERVIEW

Under Title 7 of the Correctional Services Article of the annotated Code of Maryland, the Maryland Parole Commission hears cases for parole release and revocation, and is authorized to parole inmates sentenced to a term of confinement of six months or more from any correctional institution in Maryland except the Patuxent Institution.

The Commission is authorized to issue warrants for the return of alleged violators to custody and revoke supervision upon finding that a violation of the conditions of parole or mandatory supervision release has occurred. The Commission also makes recommendations to the Governor regarding pardons, commutations of sentences and parole of inmates sentenced to life imprisonment.

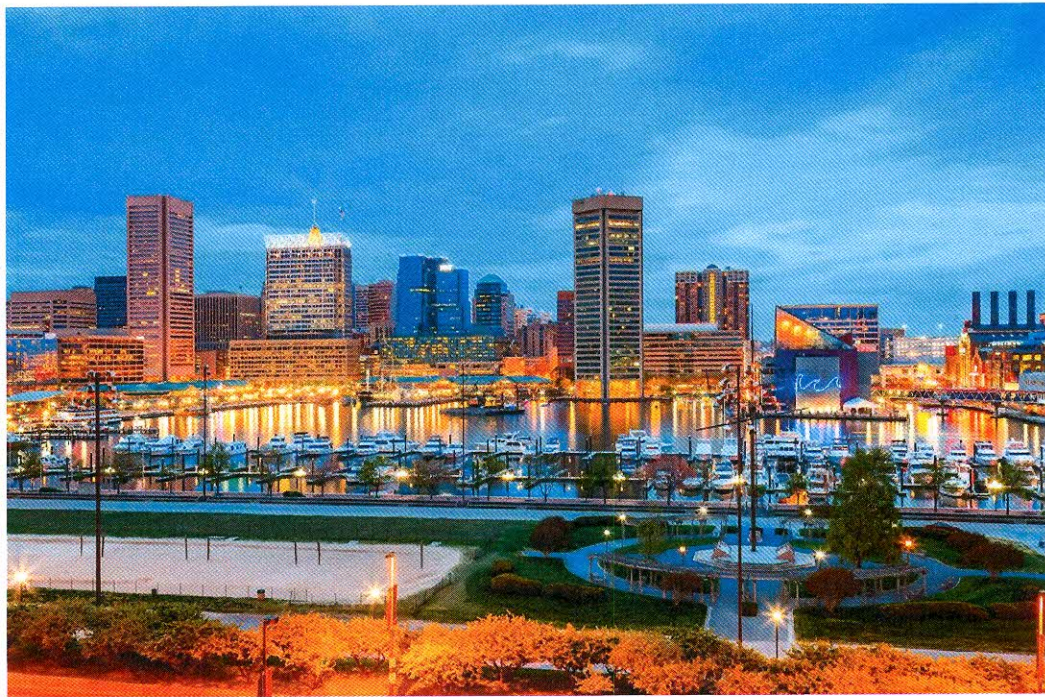
Currently, there are 10 commissioners including the Chairman, 10 hearing officers, and 48 other staff members employed at the Maryland Parole Commission.





# Fiscal Year 2018 HIGHLIGHTS

- July 25-27, 2017 Commissioners Begosh, Greene, and Smack attended the National Institute of Corrections training in Colorado.
- August 8-9, 2017 Dr. James Austin conducted training for the Justice Reinvestment Act.
- October 1, 2017 Justice Reinvestment Act (JRA) went into effect.
- October 2017 Christine Burke joined the Maryland Parole Commission as Chief Administrator.
- November 2017 Commissioners Greene and Miller joined the JRA task force.
- November 13, 2017 Chairman Blumberg conducted training for Carroll County State's Attorney's office.
- December 1, 2017 Christine Burke met with Goucher College's Prison Education Partnership Program.
- December 9, 2017 Chairman Blumberg attended the Northwest Citizens Patrol anniversary dinner.
- January 9, 2018 Jason Keckler appointed as newest Commissioner for the Maryland Parole Commission.
- February 7-8, 2018 Chairman Blumberg attended budget hearings in Annapolis
- March 5, 2018 Commissioner Jason Keckler is confirmed.
- March 21, 2018 Chairman Blumberg conducts JRA training.
- April 22-25, 2018 Association of Paroling Authorities International Conference, Chairman Blumberg is elected President.
- May 23, 2018 Chairman Blumberg is guest speaker for Baltimore City Office of the Public Defender.





# DEFINITIONS

- **Administrative Release** allows certain offenders to be released without a hearing after serving one fourth of sentence and meeting other certain eligibility requirements created by the Justice Reinvestment Act (JRA).
- **Administrative Reviews** are not face to face hearings but rather “paper” reviews of offender files at the Commission office. These reviews are conducted at five year intervals until an offender reaches parole eligibility and ensures that all the essential documents and institutional adjustment summaries necessary for a parole hearing are obtained and placed in a case file.
- **Commission Cases** are heard by a panel of two Commissioners and include cases with a loss of life, life sentences, or life sentences with all but a fixed number of years suspended, and open parole hearings.
- **Geriatric Parole** allows offenders that have reached the age of sixty to petition the parole commission for relief under certain criteria established by the Maryland Parole Commission.
- **Gubernatorial Commutation** orders that the grantee shall suffer a lesser penalty for the offense than imposed by the court. The commutation of an offenders’ sentence is normally considered by the Parole Commission only upon demonstration of extraordinary circumstances.
- **Gubernatorial Pardon** absolves the grantee of guilt for his criminal act(s), and exempts the grantee from the resulting penalties. Criteria for the pardon consideration are set by the Governor and normally require the passage of a substantial period of time following the end of the incarceration or any form of supervision before a pardon will be entertained.
- **Hearing Officer Cases** are non-Commissioner cases heard by the Hearing Officers who make recommendations reviewed by Commissioners. If the reviewing Commissioner agrees with the Hearing Officers recommendation, that recommendation becomes the Commissioners decision. An offender may appeal this decision to a panel of two Commissioners. In instances where the reviewing Commissioner does not adopt the Hearing Officers recommendation, an in house appeal results and a panel of two Commissioners make a final decision that is not appealable by the offender.
- **Interested Party** is an individual who is not a “victim” but rather an individual who has a “special interest” in the status of the offender as determined by the Commissioners Victim Services Coordinator.
- **Justice Reinvestment Act (JRA)** Bill passed by the Maryland General Assembly that became law on October 1, 2017. The JRA seeks to reduce Maryland’s prison



population and use the savings to provide for more effective treatment to offenders, before, during, and after incarceration. This is intended to reduce the likelihood of reoffending, as well as to benefit victims and families. The specific parts of the JRA that pertain to the Maryland Parole Commission provide for administrative release and caps for technical violations of parole or mandatory release.

- **Liaison Agent/ Waiver (LAW)** hearings are revocation hearings conducted by the Commissioners on offenders who have “technical” violations and admit fault/guilt to the stated violations. These offenders waive the presence of an attorney or their agent of record. For these hearings, the Division of Parole and Probation LAW unit provides an agent to act as a liaison agent who testifies during the entire docket as to the facts of each case using information provided by the agent of record.
- **Medical Parole** allows consideration for an inmate who is chronically debilitated, or incapacitated by a medical or mental health condition, disease or syndrome as to be physically incapable of presenting a danger to society to be released on medical parole at any time during the term of that inmate’s sentence without regard to parole eligibility.
- **Mandatory Supervision Release** is the release of an offender from the Division of Correction due to diminution credits earned and awarded. The offenders are supervised by parole agents and are subject to the jurisdiction of the Commission after release until the maximum expiration of their sentence. Any alleged violation of mandatory release supervision conditions may result in a revocation hearing.
- **Open Parole Hearings** are essentially the same as regular parole grant hearings except it has been opened to the public at the request of the victim or victims representative who is permitted to speak at this hearing. Individuals must make a request in writing to attend these proceedings and the Commission determines who may or may not attend. Open hearings are conducted by two Commissioners.
- **Parole** is the discretionary and conditional release of an offender into the community by the Commission to continue serving the term of confinement under the supervision of an agent of the DPSCS Community Supervision Unit until the expiration of the full, undiminished term. If any conditions of parole are violated, the offender is subject to revocation and re-incarceration.
- **Parole in Absentia** a parole hearing that occurs when an offender is housed in a jurisdiction outside the State of Maryland.
- **Parole Eligibility** is determined by sentence length and the specific crime (s) for which the offender is incarcerated.
- **Parole Grant Hearing** is an interview with the offender conducted by a Commission panel or Hearing Officer to elicit information from and about the offender. This interview along with information contained in the parole file form the basis of the Commissions’ decisions.

- **Preliminary Revocation Hearing** is held before a Hearing Officer who determines if probable cause exists with respect to the stated violations. If probable cause is found, the offender is scheduled for a revocation hearing before a Commissioner. Alleged violators may elect to have or waive preliminary revocation hearings.
- **Public Safety Program** is an agreement between the offender and the Commission in which the offender is granted discretionary parole with the stipulation that he/she will receive services through the compact provided to those returning to Baltimore City.
- **Revocation Hearings** are conducted by Commissioners on those offenders who allegedly have violated the conditions of parole or mandatory supervision and are returned to the custody of the Division of Correction or a Local Detention Facility. The supervising agent, who initiated the retake warrant process testifies at this hearing and is subject to cross examination. Offenders are represented by the Office of the Public Defender or a private attorney.
- **Victim** is a person (or a designated family member of a deceased person) who has suffered actual or threatened physical, emotional, or financial harm as a direct result of a crime.





# Commission Units

## Institutional Parole Associates

The Institutional Parole Associates (IPA) are assigned in each region as they are the liaison between the Commission and the Division of Correction. Their responsibilities include but are not limited to providing assistance to the Hearing Officers and Commissioners during parole and revocation hearings, conducting file review with offenders prior to the parole hearing, delivering parole decisions, explaining the appeal process and ensuring that offenders are properly released when scheduled. This unit is also responsible for ensuring that the attendees of Open Parole Hearings are informed of the process and provided an opportunity to ask questions.

## Pardon and Executive Clemency UNIT

This Unit is responsible for reviewing and processing all pardon and executive clemency applications, reviewing, and distributing all medical and geriatric parole requests as well as handling all correspondence with the Governor.

- Pardon Applications processed 147
- Medical paroles processed 34

## Parole Services UNIT

This unit is responsible for scheduling and docketing all parole grant hearings for DOC and Local Detention facilities to include parole in absentia cases where Maryland offenders are serving sentences in other states.

- DOC hearings conducted 6460
- Detention center hearings conducted 1659
- Detention center hearing on site 1185
- Detention center hearings on video 474
- Parole in absentia hearings 12

## POST RELEASE UNIT

The Warrant Unit is responsible for preparing and processing retake warrants, notifying outside jurisdictions of pending parole violations, and updating the appropriate databases for each case.

The Revocation Unit is responsible for scheduling preliminary hearings, issuing subpoenas, and scheduling revocation hearings for offenders incarcerated at the DOC as well as local facilities. It is also the responsibility of this unit to coordinate these hearings with private attorneys and/or public defenders.

➤ Warrants prepared	2236
➤ Subpoenas prepared	327
➤ Revocation hearings conducted	2249
➤ Preliminary hearings conducted	70
➤ Supervision revoked	632

## RECORDS UNIT

The Records Unit is responsible for maintaining parole files on offenders currently incarcerated as well as those under supervision for five years after expiration. They are also responsible for retrieving and processing supervision reports from the Division of Parole and Probation agents. All reports must be prioritized in accordance with the specificity of the request.

➤ Reports retrieved from the Division of Parole and Probation	7176
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## RELEASE UNIT

This unit is responsible for preparing parole release orders and coordinating releases for offenders granted parole from the Division of Correction and the 23 Local Detention facilities. Prior to preparing release orders, staff must ensure that the offender is serving a parole eligible offence, have completed all pre-release contingencies, ensure there are no outstanding warrants and/or detainers, and the offenders home plan has been approved.



- Division of Correction Releases 1729
- Local Detention Facility Releases 636

SUPPORT SERVICES UNIT

This Unit is responsible for handling time keeping and personnel matters, securing hotel reservations, assigning state vehicles, maintaining inventory, monitoring fleet usage and maintenance, completing injury reports handling computer issues, maintaining secure access for employees, handling property transfers, and maintaining training schedules.

SECRETARIAL UNIT

This Unit is responsible for providing secretarial support to Commissioners, Hearing Officers, and Administrative staff. This unit is also responsible for coordinating video hearings, (parole and revocation), processing parole decision appeals, monitoring cases placed on hold, distributing incoming mail, providing switchboard coverage, and entering information into the Offender Case Management System (OCMS).

- Incoming Correspondence 31638
- Incoming telephone calls 23106

Victim Services UNIT

This Unit is responsible for ensuring timely notification to victims and/or their representatives of hearings, decisions, and release dates. They are also responsible for scheduling/coordinating Open Parole Hearings, advising victims and/or their representatives of their rights and providing referrals for services.

- Victim notification letters sent to victim or representative 5412

# COMMISSIONER BIOGRAPHIES

**Sharon Trexler Begosh** – appointed in June 2015; term will expire in December 2018.

Commissioner Begosh graduated Magna Cum laude from the University of Maryland with a BA degree in Criminology. She was elected to the Phi Beta Kappa National Honor Society at that time due to her academic accomplishments. She began her career with the Maryland Division of Parole and Probation where she rose to the rank of Agent Senior. She was hired by the Montgomery County Department of Correction and Rehabilitation as a founding member of the Pre-trial Services Agency. During her tenure with Montgomery County she held various positions such as Pre-Trial Caseworker, Supervisor for the Drug Intervention Program, and ultimately as Chief of the Pre-Trial Division. Mrs. Begosh retired from county service after twenty six years.

**David R Blumberg- Chairman**- appointed October 2003; appointed Chairman July 1, 2004; re-appointed in 2010; re-appointed in 2016, term will expire in December 2021. Chairman Blumberg received a BA degree in political Science from Loyola College and a MS degree in Library Science from the University of Maryland. For twenty years, he was the director of the Baltimore City Detention Center Enoch Pratt Library. He is the Chairman of the Board of the Hopkins Club and President of Santa Claus Anonymous. In May 2015, Chairman Blumberg was recognized by the Association of Paroling Authorities International (APAI), the worldwide organization representing all releasing authorities, with the Ben Baer Award. This award is established to recognize and reward an individual who has demonstrated significant service in the field of parole or community corrections. Chairman Blumberg was elected on July 1, 2018 to be the President of APAI.

**John W. E. Cluster Jr.** – appointed August 2016; term to expire December 2021. Born in Baltimore Maryland, graduated Catonsville High School 1972, and attended Essex Community College. Commissioner Cluster is a former member of the Maryland House of Delegates from July 2003 to January 2007, January 2011 to July 2016; resigned from membership in July 2016. While serving in the House of Delegates he was honored to be named Legislator of the year many times from the law enforcement community. As a member of the House he served in both the House Environmental Matters from 2003-2007 and House Judiciary Committees 2011-2016. Prior to the House Delegates, Commissioner Cluster worked as the director of Facilities at the Department of Juvenile Services, 2003. Member, Charles H. Hickey Jr., School Advisory Board, 2005-07. Chair, Maryland Correctional Enterprises Management Council, 2015-16.



