



February 4, 2026

Baltimore City Council
Attn: Public Health & Environmental Committee
100 North Holliday Street, 4th Floor
Baltimore, MD 21202

Letter of Support: LO25-0007 Understanding Psychiatric Rehab Programs (PRPs) in Baltimore City.

Dear Councilwoman Porter and Public Health & Environmental Committee, Members:

On behalf of the Westport community, I am writing because since our original letter of support last year, we have continued to feel frightened, overwhelmed, unsafe, and unheard.

Since the Spring of 2022, we've noticed a sudden and sharp increase in strangers entering our neighborhood, who appear to be or have explicitly stated they are unhoused and/or struggling with drug addiction. They arrive by MTA Light Rail, rideshare, friends/family, or via the interstates, and they stay. Not for a few minutes, but for days, weeks, or sometimes much longer. And while we understand that addiction is a disease and homelessness is a crisis, their presence has become a public safety emergency.

Neighbors continue to experience burglarized properties and countless incidents of arson. Mainly in the winter months. We've had neighbors attacked—one hospitalized after being hit with a brick. I've personally been violated, and countless neighbors share similar stories. We've seen blatant drug use and prostitution in broad daylight, in alleys, at the MTA Light Rail Plaza, in the Historic Mount Auburn Cemetery, in our newly renovated playgrounds, in front yards, in backyards, and along the multiple routes that our children take to walk to school without regard. We've called 911. We've voiced our concerns at the Southern District Community Relations Council (CRC) meetings. We have called all pertinent city agencies. We've asked for assistance from City State's Attorney Ivan Bates and our State Legislators that represent Baltimore City. And still, it continues.

What is infuriating is that our community is not being protected. Westport is a small, geographically separated, working-class neighborhood whose population is predominantly long-time Black residents. We are proud of our historic neighborhood and our accomplishments, but it is clear to us that when the people causing disruption and harm are admittedly from outside the city or state, the response is slower, softer, or mostly nonexistent.

We also know this is not only about Westport because community leaders from other Baltimore neighborhoods have reported the same problem. The Maryland Department of Health's own data shows that Baltimore City is **oversaturated** with opioid treatment facilities, while counties like Garrett, Caroline, Montgomery, and Prince George's have few to [no treatment facilities](#) (*Behavioral Health Administration et al., 2024, pg. 9*). Baltimore City has become the default treatment zone for the entire region, absorbing the overflow from counties that have failed to build their own systems of care.



While the other 23 Maryland counties maintain their presumed high quality of life and stable property values, we are left to endure the opposite.

The Police Consent Decree, initially enacted to protect city residents, is now being used to shield outsiders from other counties and states from prosecution for crimes like theft, arson, harassment, trespassing, and physical assaults on Baltimore citizens.

We need to feel safe in and around our homes as quickly as possible. The individuals who've trespassed into the not-so-affluent city neighborhoods would not be treated the same way if they were loitering in a quiet cul-de-sac in the other counties.

Solution: Psychiatric Rehabilitation Programs (PRPs) are not appropriate for residential neighborhoods, even when zoned for mixed use, where density, limited boundaries, and inadequate infrastructure make them unsuitable for this type of operation. These programs belong in properly zoned healthcare or commercial areas that provide reliable transit access and ADA-compliant facilities. This approach ensures that clients receive appropriate services while protecting the stability and safety of densely populated residential communities.

Whether we rent or own our homes, we are all taxpayers, and our Mayor, City Council, and pertinent local and state agency leaders must recognize that our lives matter just as much as anyone else's. As the bill moves toward a long-term solution, immediate assistance is urgently needed now.

Sincerely,

Keisha Allen

Keisha Allen
Westport Neighborhood Association

Cc: Representative Kweisi Mfume
Senate President Bill Ferguson
Delegate Robyn Lewis
Delegate Luke Clippinger
Delegate Mark Edelson
Lisa Hodges-Hiken, Esq., Westport CEDC

References:

Behavioral Health Administration, Maryland Department of Health, & Komuro, N. (2024). Analysis of the FY 2025 Maryland Executive Budget, 2024. <https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/Pubs/BudgetFiscal/2025fy-budget-docs-operating-M00L-MDH-Behavioral-Health-Administration.pdf#:~:text=Exhibit%205%20shows%20the%20number%20of%20individuals%20in,providers%20in%20each%20jurisdiction%2C%20as%20of%20fiscal%202021.>