



Legislation Summary:

An Act relative to medical placement of terminal and incapacitated inmates

Initial bill number: [S874](#) (Bill numbers will change as legislation proceeds.)

Sponsors: Sen. Patricia Jehlen

This bill allows for conditional medical parole for individuals in custody with terminal illnesses or permanent incapacitation. It requires the state to consider parole if the individual, medical provider or family requests it and there is a risk assessment and care plan amenable to release. The Parole Board may then grant a hearing with all interested parties and conditions for safe release will be determined. If the release is granted, the individual will remain under the supervision of the parole board until such time as the sentence would have expired.

Why this is good: It will allow for individuals to get better treatment and at a lower cost to the state. Last November, former House speaker [Sal DiMasi was given medical release](#) from federal prison, which encouraged discussion in the Commonwealth of compassionate release for other inmates. At least 30 states allow for comprehensive medical release and nearly all have a procedure to release dying individuals to alternative locations, such as nursing homes or hospice care. Prisons are not set up to care for severely ill individuals.

Bottom Line: As the state spends \$100 million a year in health care for inmates, millions of dollars in lower costs should be realized by implementing compassionate release. Individuals will get better care, at lower cost, and it is more humane for the families and the patients.