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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

December 11, 2018

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## **State Legislators Join Disability Rights Maryland to Announce the Release of Report Detailing Conditions at the Maryland Correctional Institution for Women**

*Report will describe findings related to the death of a young woman in segregation and conditions in restrictive housing units.*

On Friday, December 14<sup>th</sup>, Disability Rights Maryland (DRM) will host a press conference to announce the release of our Report: **Segregation and Suicide: Confinement at the Maryland Correctional Institution for Women**. This Report was completed by DRM and Munib Lohrasbi, a Community Fellow with the Open Society Institute of Baltimore (OSI).

**WHAT: Release of Segregation and Suicide: Confinement at the Maryland Correctional Institution for Women**

**WHERE: 1500 Union Avenue Baltimore, Maryland 21211**

**WHEN: Friday, December 14, 2018 beginning at 2:00 PM**

**WHO:** Speakers will include:

**Senator Susan Lee**, Senate Deputy Majority Whip, Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee, 16<sup>th</sup> District

**Delegate Jazz Lewis**, House Judiciary Committee, 24<sup>th</sup> District

**Delegate-Elect Sara Love**, 16<sup>th</sup> District

**Robin Murphy**, Executive Director of Disability Rights Maryland

**Julie Magers**, Leader of the Maryland Prisoners' Rights Coalition

**Munib Lohrasbi**, OSI-Baltimore Community Fellow

DRM, a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization, is Maryland's designated Protection & Advocacy Agency federally mandated to advance the civil rights of individuals with disabilities. DRM has legal authority to monitor conditions and investigate allegations of abuse or neglect in any

facility that provides services to people with disabilities. DRM provides free legal services to Marylanders of any age with disabilities who live in the community, treatment facilities, or who are homeless.

The Report discloses the extreme isolation and harm or risk of harm to numerous women with significant disabilities housed in the segregation, infirmary, and mental health units at the Maryland Correctional Institution for Women. Conditions in the units varied, but DRM observed problems with access to outdoor and indoor recreation; natural light; mattresses or bedding; insufficient treatment plans; and a lack of confidentiality for health care services. The harm caused by prison segregation practices is pointedly evidenced by the suicide a young woman with mental health issues who was incarcerated for a non-violent offense and who took her life while in segregation. DRM's investigation, set forth in the Report, finds that MCIW failed to exercise reasonable standards of care during the time period surrounding her suicide. The Report offers recommendations for less harmful and safer correctional practices that conform to professional standards and comply with federal and Constitutional requirements.

DRM's Director of Litigation, Lauren Young remarked, "The use of segregation in prison— the extreme isolation, the lack of physical and social engagement, sometimes combined with a lack of bedding, clothing, natural light or exercise, are conditions which Maryland has been shamefully slow to reject, especially as applied to individuals with serious disabilities; and compared with other states. We share this information because it is indispensable to the reforms that must come, but which will not succeed if conditions are kept from public consciousness."

Please contact Munib Lohrasbi to RSVP or for more information.