

## MARYLAND ALLIANCE FOR JUSTICE REFORM

Working to end unnecessary incarceration and build strong, safe communities



## Tell Your Delegates to vote NO on SB 983

### The Money Bail Bill Is Still Alive. Please, One Last Call - Tuesday!

We were sorry to see that SB 983, the bill MAJR has been lobbying against, is scheduled to come out of the House Rules Committee and will be sent to the House Judiciary Committee for a hearing on Wednesday, or Thursday at the latest. If it passes there, it will go to the floor of the House. This bill would put money in the pockets of bail bondsmen at the expense of Maryland residents. **Please contact your Delegates NOW and ask them to oppose SB 983 if it gets to the floor of the House.**

This is our last chance to defeat this bill. Here are some talking points:

1) Senate Bill 983, even as amended, continues to insist on bail being used to address public safety. As amended this bill would allow dangerous persons to be released with bail—rich people who have been deemed dangerous can avoid pretrial detention—while poor people who are neither a public safety danger nor flight risk **remain jailed simply because they couldn't afford bail.**

2) In February 2017, the Maryland Court of Appeals reformed the way judges apply Maryland law regarding bail. At the urging of Attorney General Frosh, the Court decided that bail should no longer be used to address public safety; that judges may not set bail in an amount that the judge knows the defendant cannot afford. If the courts determine that a defendant is a public safety danger, then they should be detained. **No amount of money will make them any less dangerous.**

As noted by [the Washington Post](#): "What the court understood—and what the Legislative Black Caucus endorsed with its overwhelming vote Thursday to oppose the Senate bill—is that decisions about who should be jailed should be tied to a defendant's flight risk and threat to public safety and not to their bank accounts."

3) The overwhelming thrust of Senate Bill 983 is to protect the profit of the bail industry

by reinforcing the use of money bail in our justice system. According to a recent report from the Maryland Office of the Public Defender, over \$75 million in bail bond premiums were paid from 2011 to 2015 by persons who were never convicted of any of the crimes they faced. Between 2011-2015, Black defendants were charged premiums of at least \$181 million in 18 jurisdictions in Maryland, while defendants of all other races combined were charged \$75 million. Senate Bill 983 even as amended increases the reliance on money bail, without regard for the racial disparities in its use and ensures that the industry remains profitable from the unnecessary detention of low-risk pretrial defendants.

4) **Who pays?** Maryland taxpayers are now paying about \$150/day per person to keep an average of 16,500 persons in local jails while they await trial; guilty until proven innocent. While in jail awaiting trial, sometimes for months, many people lose their jobs and homes and lose the ability to support their families and communities—often a further drain on taxpayers. Some of these state revenues could be used to provide services to help keep people out of jail—counseling, drug abuse and alcohol counseling, and educational and employment services.

Please contact your Delegates on Tuesday and ask them to vote against SB 983 if it goes to the House floor. If it does, things could move fast. To identify your Delegates, go to <http://mdelect.net> and put in your address. Then click on their names for contact information.

**Many thanks!**



**MAJR General Meeting**

Sunday, May 7 at 2:00 p.m.  
Stony Run Friends Meeting  
5116 N. Charles St.  
Baltimore, MD 21210

Learn how we fared in Annapolis this year. Help us plan our strategy for the next legislative session.

---

MAJR is a nonpartisan association of over forty community organizations and churches with members in every part of the state, formed to support justice reinvestment. Individual supporters include judges, attorneys, corrections professionals, as well as returning citizens, victims, and service providers.

**Help us by forwarding this newsletter to your community!**

Visit: <http://www.ma4jr.org>

*Copyright © 2017 Maryland Alliance for Justice Reform, All rights reserved.*

Want to change how you receive these emails?  
You can **update your preferences** or **unsubscribe from this list**

MailChimp