

MARYLAND ALLIANCE FOR JUSTICE REFORM

Working to end unnecessary incarceration and build strong, safe communities



Maryland Alliance for Justice Reform Reporting

At its public meeting on June 21, 2016, MAJR made a commitment to monitor the activities of the State of Maryland and report as best we can on the various meetings of important committees and conferences.

MAJR volunteer reporters have been at work! Together we covered a dozen events focused on Justice Reinvestment and the issues which have brought us together. Here is a growing list of reports as we work together to end mass incarceration in Maryland. Find these links on our website at: <http://www.ma4jr.org/reports/>

- **Justice Reinvestment Act**

[Analysis of the Maryland Justice Reinvestment Act: Signed April 6, 2016](#)

- **Workgroup on Collateral Consequences of Convictions**

[Four Full Workgroup Meetings plus Two Stakeholder Meetings](#)

September 1 – November 15

- **Money Bail**

[Money Bail and Its Role in Mass Incarceration](#)

University of Baltimore Conference on Bail Reform – November 17, 2016

- **Returning Citizens**

[Creating Opportunity for Returning Citizens in Maryland and Beyond](#)

Dec. 8, 2016, sponsored by American Enterprise Institute and University of Baltimore

- **Justice Reinvestment Oversight Board**

[Reports on the Initial Meeting: January 4](#)

[Status of the Justice Reinvestment Act on January 19, 2017](#)

Report to Joint Sessions of the Maryland Assembly

- **Judicial Rules**

[Appeals Court Decides on Bail Reform: Report on February 7 decision](#)

- **MAJR Minutes**

Record of the MAJR Meeting: 1 February 2017

Reentry Conference

Creating Opportunity for Returning Citizens in Maryland and Beyond



Last December, the **American Enterprise Institute** and the University of Baltimore sponsored a conference focused on successful programs and strategies that help returning citizens succeed. Business owners, entrepreneurs, judges, and ex-offenders working in their communities all described their experiences and shared insights. MAJR members Rosalie Dance, Candy Clark, Deborah Friese, and Adrian Bishop prepared a comprehensive report. You will want to check it out – it is rich with detail and helpful to anyone who wants to keep returning citizens from committing new offenses that land them back in jail or prison.

Topics covered include Maryland's labor conditions, the **Greater Baltimore Committee, Helping Others to Win, Texas's Prison Entrepreneurship Program (PEP)**, the courts and criminal justice reform, **Maryland's Second Chance Pell Grant Program** sites, strategies used by various cities and states to help returning citizens succeed, the experience of employers with hiring returning citizens, and the insights of returning citizens themselves on what held them back and what helped them succeed.

Read MAJR's full report [here](#).

Justice Reinvestment Act Briefing



On January 19, members of the Maryland Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee and the House Judiciary Committee were briefed on progress in implementing the Justice Reinvestment Act (JRA). **MAJR's reporters were present and filed a complete report on our website.** The meeting included a summary of the Act from Judge Long, who Chairs the oversight board charged with monitoring its implementation. The Executive Director of the **Governor's Office of Crime Control and Prevention (GOCCP)** said that his office is ready to provide technical and financial assistance to **Justice Reinvestment Oversight Board** and both General Assembly committees. He anticipates that, eventually, there will be savings from reducing prison beds for non-violent offenders.

Other reports and presentations included a summary of recommendations of the

Collateral Consequences Workgroup by Chair Judge Williams, a report on progress related to offenders with behavioral health disorders by the Deputy Secretary of the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, a report on best practices in mediation, an update on how courts are implementing the JRA, and a discussion of the status of pretrial and bail reform.

Thanks to the following MAJR Reporters: Debbie Friese, James Rose, Karen Clark. Read their full report [here](#).



Juvenile Lifers Have a Chance

Federal Court Clears Way for Juvenile Lifers' Challenge to Maryland Parole System

Ruling suggests the current scheme is unconstitutional as it denies “meaningful” chance for release regardless of individual merit; it operates like system of clemency. In a lengthy opinion tracing the history of Maryland’s parole scheme and the plaintiffs’ allegations, Judge Hollander observed:

- “A parole procedure does little in the way of actually making parole a possibility when the decision of whether to commute a sentence is entirely up to [the governor’s] discretion and the political tides of the day. And, a system of executive clemency, which lacks governing standards, does not constitute a meaningful opportunity to obtain release for Juvenile Offenders. ...”

In ruling that the case can go forward, the judge held that “[a]t this stage of the proceedings, plaintiffs have sufficiently alleged that Maryland’s parole system operates as a system of executive clemency, in which opportunities for release are ‘remote,’ rather than a true parole scheme in which opportunities for release are ‘meaningful and ‘realistic,’ as required by [the Supreme Court.]”

Learn more at http://www.aclu-md.org/press_room/298

This month MAJR is working with the Maryland Restorative Justice Initiative to pass **HB723/SB055** to remove the Governor from the parole process. Support us in this effort by contacting your [legislator](#).

Read about the Lifers issue at <http://www.ma4jr.org/parole-incentive-for-life/>

Prisoners Rights / Pretrial Reform Advocacy Day

When: Tuesday, February 28, 9am – 2pm

9 – 10 am: Refreshments and Advocacy Training



10 – 11 am: Explanation of bills and Q&A
11 am – 1 pm: Visits with legislators in their offices
1 pm – 2 pm: Debriefing

Where: Lowe House Office Building, 6 Bladen Street, Room 406,
Annapolis 21401

Sign up at: <https://goo.gl/forms/sdMotvdnZ4FjLwaL2>

Meet important legislators, ask for their support, influence the future!

Job Opportunities Task Force (JOTF) Lobby Day

When: Tue, March 28

Where: Annapolis Legislature

Let us join together in Annapolis to urge support for legislative initiatives that seek to advance reform in criminal justice, economic justice, environmental justice, and racial justice.

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>

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