

MARYLAND ALLIANCE FOR JUSTICE REFORM

Working to end unnecessary incarceration and build strong, safe communities



MAJR Cheers the Workgroup on Collateral Consequences of Convictions!

As part of Maryland's efforts to reform the criminal justice system, Governor Hogan started an initiative to study the consequences of incarceration for former inmates. In December 2015, he **directed the Governor's Office of Crime Control & Prevention to create a working group** to study the legal and regulatory barriers many ex-offenders face when they are released from prison. "These consequences have a lasting impact, making it more difficult for ex-offenders to re-enter society, find a job, and fully engage in the community," said Governor Hogan. The workgroup must submit a report on its findings and recommendations to the Governor in December 2016.

This working group met for the first time on September 1, 2016. Our intrepid team of MAJR Monitors was there, and a summary of **our report** appears later in the newsletter.

Who is on the Working Group?

- **Judge Alex Williams**, Chair, Center for Education, Justice & Ethics
- Shaina Hernandez, Greater Baltimore Committee
- Secretary Schulz or her designee, Department of Labor, Licensing & Regulation
- Christi Megna, Department of Health and Mental Hygiene
- Secretary Moyer or designee, Dept of Public Safety & Correctional Services
- Glenn Fueston, Governor's Office of Crime Control & Prevention
- Caryn Aslan, Job Opportunities Task Force
- Yariela Kerr-Donovan, Johns Hopkins HR Department
- Marsha Netus, AmericaWorks
- Chrstine Ross, Maryland Chamber of Commerce
- Mike O'Halloran, National Federation for Independent Business – Maryland
- James Brenton, Jr., Ahold USA
- John Huffington, Living Classrooms
- Oscar Barbarian, University of Maryland



What you can do!

Opportunity for Stakeholder Input!

The workgroup is planning two stakeholder meetings in which stakeholders, such as returning citizens and the people who help them find employment, can give input. **Locations will be announced on the workgroup's website.** Here are the dates:

- **Thursday, September 15, 12-3 pm**, location in Annapolis MD to be announced
- **Friday, October 14, 1 – 3 pm** location in Baltimore MD to be announced

How can you give effective input that will help the workgroup? Here are a few tips:

- State clearly what you believe the workgroup should recommend.
- Support your opinion with facts or your experience.
- Keep your remarks concise and very focused on what the workgroup should do.

Note that it's fine to identify yourself as a MAJR member, but **please do not say you are representing MAJR.** Recommendations from MAJR are developed by the Executive Committee based on careful consideration of members' feedback, focus groups, research, and input from allied organizations.

Public Workgroup Meetings

The workgroup plans three more meetings, all of which are open to the public. All will be in Annapolis, most likely in the Legislative Hearing Room:

- **Monday, September 26, 12-3pm**
- **Monday, October 31, 10am to 1pm**
- **Tuesday, November 15, 12 to 3pm**

What Happened at the First Workgroup Meeting?

In brief: Judge Williams explained the purpose of the workgroup, after which Cara Sullivan gave an overview of the JRA. The workgroup's attention then turned to the availability of research pertinent to its charge. Dr. Jinney Smith,

Associate Director of the University of Maryland Data Analysis Center, reported that there is little research and actual data for Maryland the Center can use concerning the difficulty for ex-offenders in securing employment. The assumption is that these difficulties increase recidivism. She identified several questions the Center would like to address, to the extent possible, using existing data.

Judge Williams reported that a recent focus group highlighted many issues related to collateral consequences in Maryland. He noted that:

- The type of conviction leading to application denial varies from board to board.
- The time required to approve an application becomes a barrier.
- It matters whether records are sealed.
- Submission of incomplete applications can affect consideration for employment. How can this be prevented?
- Applicants are often unaware of their own records, which come up in searches.
- There are important distinctions between felonies and misdemeanors.
- State policies on barriers are important.
- Federal and state policies conflict in some areas.

The Chair graciously allowed audience members to speak, and several of those in attendance provided input. The Chair closed by announcing the dates and locations of upcoming stakeholder and workgroup meetings (see above).

Caryn Aslan of the **Job Opportunities Task Force** announced that a symposium will be held at the University of Maryland and focus on the implementation of the Justice Reinvestment Act. We don't know the time yet, but the date is: ***Thursday, October 27.***

Complete notes from the meeting are available at <http://www.ma4jr.org/workgroup-0901/> on the MAJR website. Thanks to Barbara Thomas and Susannah Rose.



MAJR General Meeting

Wednesday, September 21 at 6:30 p.m.

People for Change Coalition,
9500 Arena Drive, Suite 460
Largo, Maryland 20772

We will continue our planning for the 2017 legislative session and for monitoring progress of the newly-created Justice Reinvestment Oversight Board. Food will be provided to those who RSVP to Patience Schenck at pat.schenck3227@gmail.com

MAJR is a nonpartisan association of over thirty 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!

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