

# MARYLAND ALLIANCE FOR JUSTICE REFORM

Working together for a criminal justice system that serves our communities



## [Prisoners Employment and Rehabilitation Act](#)

### **What's the Problem?**

Both [federal](#) and state studies clearly show that ex-offenders who are employed are much less likely to commit new offenses than those who are unemployed.

[A study in Indiana reports](#) that lack of employment of ex-offenders is the #1 predictor of recidivism. Unemployed offenders are twice as likely to return to prison than those who have a job.

[Christopher Uggen of the University of Minnesota reported](#) that work was “a turning point in the life course of criminals.”

[Maryland also has recognized](#) that an ex-offender’s ability to support himself “as soon as possible after release is important to reentry success ...”

But, despite this, Maryland now offers only 1 in 10 inmates the opportunity to participate in job-training programs while in state prisons. Maryland’s prison employment program—[Maryland Correctional Enterprises](#)—reports a 60% reduction in recidivism for inmates who complete its programs.

### **What’s the Proposal?**

The Maryland Alliance for Justice Reform proposes that Maryland use “[Justice Reinvestment Funding](#)” to save money by removing low risk inmates from state prisons and to use part of the money saved to expand job training and other job opportunities for ex-offenders.

### **Will this Work?**

As [discussed above](#), employment is the single strongest factor needed to prevent new offenses by ex-offenders.

The unmistakable benefits of self-supporting work on ex-offenders have been demonstrated by federal studies, other state’s studies, and in Maryland’s model [Montgomery County Pre-Release Center](#).

### **The Legislation**

MAJR's proposed legislation would use savings from existing corrections funds

- to expand [Maryland Correctional Enterprises](#)—jobs programs for inmates serving time in state prison and
- to support more [job placement and “enterprise employers”](#) to provide jobs for inmates in reentry programs, transitioning back into their communities at the end of their prison terms.

[Read the full text of the legislation.](#)

### **Learn More!**

Read about [Maryland Correctional Enterprises](#) which should be expanded to offer job-training to more than 1 in 10 inmates.

Read about [Montgomery County Pre Release Center](#)'s successful inmate reentry employment program.

Read about [scientific analyses of data](#) from the Rand Corporation regarding inmate education, job training and employment.

There is a lively discussion of the need for this approach:

- Read about programs in [New York](#).
- Read about the need for reform in [Tennessee](#).
- Read about alternatives to incarceration in [Texas](#).
- And read about [state initiatives](#) throughout the nation.

### **Contact your Legislators**

Voice your opinion about this initiative to your legislators. Here is a list of the [members of the Maryland General Assembly](#) with links to their web pages. To find who represents you in the Assembly, [click here](#).

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Maryland Alliance for Justice Reform  
Annapolis Friends Peace and Justice Center  
351 Dubois Rd., Annapolis, MD 21401  
443-583-4251  
MAJR.legislation@gmail.com