

MARYLAND ALLIANCE FOR JUSTICE REFORM

Working to end unnecessary incarceration and build strong, safe communities



Who We Are

The Maryland Alliance for Justice Reform (MAJR) is a nonpartisan association of over forty community organizations and churches with members in every part of the state. We seek legislative changes in Maryland's correctional policies to support alternatives to incarceration, address inequities, and aid citizens returning from prison to lead productive lives, thus strengthening families and communities. Individual supporters include judges, attorneys, and corrections professionals, as well as returning citizens, victims, and service providers.

Mission

- To advocate for legislative reforms of Maryland's criminal justice system that emphasize rehabilitation and restorative justice over mass incarceration and punishment.
- To create opportunities for those committed to criminal justice reform to meet, share resources, and engage with each other around common purposes.
- To raise awareness and understanding, among citizens of Maryland, of mass incarceration and promote positive alternatives.

Join Us!

We are working together to address the problem of mass incarceration in Maryland in several ways. We invite you to join us to accomplish our goals:

- To fully support alternatives to incarceration where appropriate;
- To save taxpayer dollars and reallocate the savings to build safer communities;
- To strengthen Maryland communities by supporting families, helping people returning from jails and prisons lead productive lives, and preventing crime;
- To end inequities in our justice system.

How We Work Together

Each of us brings unique strengths and perspectives to this work. Our work is enhanced by learning from each other, building on one another's ideas, and sharing responsibility for the group's success.

Our priorities are informed by workgroups that address three major policy areas: (1) The **"Front Door"** workgroup considers changes in how we strive to prevent crime and handle the pretrial process; (2) The **"Behind the Walls"** workgroup addresses issues related to people who are incarcerated, such as the effects of solitary confinement and the need for education; (3) The **"Back Door"** workgroup recommends changes to help people returning from prison re-enter society, including measures to reduce recidivism (return to prison). Membership is open and all are invited to participate at general meetings. Learn more about how we are organized at: <http://www.ma4jr.org/organization/>.

To support and participate in MAJR activities, go to <http://www.ma4jr.org/> and click on "Get Involved." Our website provides background on our initiatives and also offers reports (including reports on key meetings and workshops that address criminal justice issues in Maryland) and resources. You can also like us on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/ma4jr.org/>

2018 Legislative Initiatives

At its general meeting on September 25, 2017, MAJR members gave approval to the following legislative initiatives for 2018.

Front Door:

Pretrial/Bail Reform: Support a coalition proposal to remedy inequitable bail usage; support for more effective pretrial services throughout the State. Work with the Maryland State's Attorneys' Association, mediation offices, and other organizations to encourage more effective pretrial screening and mediation diversion. For more detail see <http://www.ma4jr.org/pretrial-fact-sheet/>

Citations as Alternatives to Arrest. Citation in lieu of arrest has been widely embraced as a law enforcement tool, and Maryland has a history of success in using this tool. See <http://www.ma4jr.org/citations/>

Technical Violations: Sponsor a court Rule revision to prevent judges from issuing no-bail arrest warrants for minor offenses such as technical violations of probation.

Diversion: Work with other advocates and groups on pretrial diversion for individuals with mental illness.

Behind the Walls:

Solitary Confinement Initiative. MAJR will support legislation of the Interfaith Action for Human Rights (IAHR): http://www.interfaithactionhr.org/maryland_petition

Removing the Governor from the parole process for inmates with life sentences with the possibility of parole. MAJR will continue to support the legislation of the Restorative Justice Initiative. <http://www.justicepolicy.org/news/8836>

Education: Lobby to increase Maryland resources for prison education and vocational training, now hampered by ineffective screening and low pay for teachers.

Families: Encourage support to improve opportunities for inmates to relate with family members.

Back Door:

Ban-the-Box: Work to override the Governor's veto of the Maryland Fair Access to Education Act. See: <http://www.ma4jr.org/ban-the-box/>

Expungement: Work with the Job Opportunities Task Force to support for expanded expungement laws. See <http://www.ma4jr.org/expungement-unit-rule/>

Certificate: Lobby to expand the "certificate of rehabilitation" statute, currently limited to state licensing. See: <http://www.ma4jr.org/certificate/>

Collateral Consequences: Endorse efforts to ensure Maryland courts warn defendants of the scope of possible collateral consequences of conviction. For more detail see <http://www.ma4jr.org/collateral-consequences/>