

MARYLAND ALLIANCE FOR JUSTICE REFORM

Working to end unnecessary incarceration and build strong, safe communities



Minutes: 11/15/2017 General Meeting

Sixty-five participants gathered at Stony Run Friends Meeting House on Wednesday, November 15th to discuss our legislative initiatives and other focussed proposals that MAJR will pursue over the next year. Specific actions were detailed by the three workgroups: the Front Door workgroup; the Behind the Walls workgroup; and the Back Door workgroup.

Projects range from overriding the Governor's veto on Ban-the-Box, increasing resources for prison education and vocational training, and supporting expanded expungement laws. To read the detailed minutes of this meeting go to <http://www.ma4jr.org/majr-15-nov-2017/>

For an introductory flyer introducing MAJR and its initiatives, download <http://www.ma4jr.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Flyer2018.pdf>

Report: Justice Reinvestment Oversight Board



The Justice Reinvestment Oversight Board, charged with monitoring the implementation of Maryland's Justice Reinvestment act, met on November 15, 2017, and two MAJR reporters were present. Their full report is available on [the MAJR website](#).

The Board heard that the Department of Health & Mental Hygiene is working to be able to meet the 21-day placement requirement in the JRA for prisoners who need treatment and believes it can do so.

The Division of Corrections is tasked with developing four new processes and policies, including a Certificate of Rehabilitation, Earned Credits, and Graduated Sanctions. All policies are now approved and published, and staff are receiving training.

The Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation is offering occupational programs,

some of which could result in national certification. 12,000 prisoners participate each year. Unfortunately, they are unable to take the certification tests because they cannot access the Internet due to safety and security concerns. MAJR is interested in information on how other state and federal correctional systems are overcoming these concerns to make the internet safely available. If you have information on best practices, contact susanhillrose@gmail.com.

Staff and inmates are receiving information on expungement. The courts will seek help from the legislature to meet the need for additional employees because of the high volume of requests for expungement.



MAJR thanks Rosalie Dance and Adrian Bishop for preparing the thorough summary on our website. **Check it out** – it's well worth a read!

Action: State's Attorney Elections

State's Attorneys in Maryland are accountable to you, the public, and are elected to their position every four years. How much information is available for you to make the decision? Are the candidates for the office of State's Attorney in your county "tough on crime" or are they "smart on crime"?



A primary concern of MAJR is informing voters about the intent and qualifications of candidates for the office of State's Attorney. To further this effort we have a few suggested questions that those candidates could address.

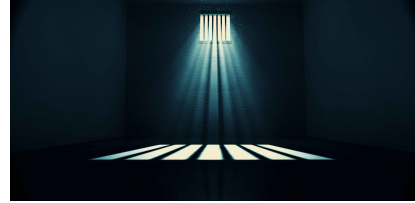
1. In your opinion is there a difference between being "tough on crime" and being "smart on crime"? Please explain.
2. Should minor offenses be decriminalized, resulting in fines instead of jail time?
3. Where do you stand on bail reform? Do you favor using pretrial risk assessment? Will you recommend pretrial supervision?
4. Do you endorse timely pretrial screening for minor offenses?
5. Would you work to expand criminal diversions in this County in which willing victims and offenders are offered mediation?
6. Are you committed to filing only those charges that the evidence supports?
7. Would you support reducing time required for expungement from 10 to 5 years for nonviolent offenses?
8. How should the position of State's Attorney be evaluated?

To see a more complete discussion of the concern see the MAJR issue brief:

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

Solitary: The Lonesome Death of Emily Butler

The recent editorial about the tragic death of Emily Butler, who died by suicide while in solitary confinement, highlights for the public the hidden story behind a cruel practice (“[The lonesome death of Emily Butler](#),” Baltimore Sun, Nov. 20).



Julie Magers, coalition leader with the [Maryland Prisoners' Rights Coalition](#) (MPRC), said Maryland uses solitary confinement at about twice the national average. She said mentally ill inmates “fare worse.” The suicides are “clear indications and evidence that systemic reform is drastically needed for both mental health care and the use of solitary confinement within our correctional facilities,” she said.

Join MAJR, MPRC, and the [Interfaith Action on Human Rights](#) (IAHR) in raising awareness of Maryland's practice of segregation in our prisons.



MAJR General Meeting

Wednesday 1/24/17
6:00pm - Potluck Supper
7pm-9pm General Meeting

Location to be announced....

Join us in welcoming two more endorsing organizations:

Takoma Park Mobilization: neighbors working together to engage our community and take action to support ALL of our neighbors. We commit to: Engaging our community to create equity and justice and tangibly improve people's lives.

Bridge Maryland, a congregation based organization uniting communities across denominational, racial, geographic, and socio-economic boundaries in the Baltimore metropolitan area in order to create equity and justice.

See our list of the Alliance: <http://www.ma4jr.org/endorsing-organizations/>

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!

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