

## MARYLAND ALLIANCE FOR JUSTICE REFORM

Working to end unnecessary incarceration and build strong, safe communities



## MAJR General Meeting

Wednesday, January 24

6:30pm - 8:30pm

Potluck Supper and General Meeting

UA House at Fayette operated by [Living Classrooms](#)  
1100 E. Fayette Street  
Baltimore, MD 21202.



The Maryland legislature successfully passed the Maryland Fair Access to Education Act of 2017 (Senate Bill 543/House Bill 694) with **substantial majorities** in the House and Senate. The bill removed the arrest/conviction question from initial college applications to allow applicants to be assessed first on academic merit alone (the question could still be asked later).

**But at the end of the session Governor Hogan vetoed the bill.**

Now, we must come together to override the veto!!! Everyone deserves a chance to attend college. And we know that keeping returning citizens from furthering their education does not increase public safety - it just makes it harder for people to access opportunities and support themselves.

The vote to override the veto will happen **in the next week**. **Who are your representatives?** Phone your State Senator and Delegates and ask them to support this measure. See how they voted last year: **House, Senate.**

## Smart on Crime

Governor Hogan should be congratulated for **offering State support** to Baltimore City efforts to make our communities stronger and safer.



Most of the Governor's proposals are right on target and include: organizing law enforcement for gangs and other offenders who cross City and county lines; directing state police to offer needed back-up for City police; and adding more intensive parole and probation support.

But two parts of the Governor's proposal, mandatory increased sentences, and denial of parole for repeat offenders, seek to revert to "Tough-on-Crime" policies that might aggravate the problem, not solve it. Such punishments, according to a 2015 **Pew Institute study** of Maryland's criminal justice system, do not make a significant contribution to the reduction of recidivism, but they do cost taxpayers more for prisons.

Governor Hogan has taken a major step to revamp the Criminal Justice System in Maryland with his support for the passage of the 2016 **Justice Reinvestment Act** and ongoing efforts to implement it. Let's pursue that initiative and develop a more comprehensive approach to Maryland's problems of violent criminal behavior.

See the details of MAJR's proposal at: <http://www.ma4jr.org/smart-on-crime-2/>

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## The School to Prison Pipeline: A Maryland Commission Gets to Work

The Maryland Commission on the School to Prison Pipeline and Restorative Practices, created in the 2017 legislative session, is charged with studying discipline practices in Maryland public schools; focusing on Maryland data indicative of the School-to-Prison Pipeline; and examining best practices for implementation and training in restorative practices to eliminate the disproportionate treatment of students, with a focus on engaging parents. On November 17, the Commission held a meeting at the University of Maryland School of Law, and



two of MAJR's intrepid reporters were there. Read the full report at:

<http://www.ma4jr.org/school-to-prison1/>

Dwanna Nicole, the Director of Policy and Stakeholder Outreach for the Advancement Project, stated that the Advancement Project has been focusing on this issue since 1999. She noted that three factors contribute to the school-to-prison pipeline:

1. Discipline policies;
2. Prison-like conditions in schools, including the presence of law enforcement and metal detectors in the school buildings;
3. Over-reliance on referrals to law enforcement and the juvenile justice system by school personnel.

She noted that data on the rates of suspension from school shows that African American boys and girls are suspended at disproportionate rates. Data from the US Department of Education clearly indicate that race is the determining factor, even when other factors such as poverty are held constant. Ms. Nicole also reported that 1.6 million children attend schools where there is a law enforcement officer present in the school, but there is not a counselor in the school

Dr. Lisa Williams, Executive Director of the Office of Equity and Cultural Proficiency for Baltimore County Public Schools, reported that there is an over-representation of students of color in Special Education, while there are fewer opportunities for Early Childhood Education for students of color. She also observed that students of color are being treated more severely when teachers and administrators subjectively assess behavior.



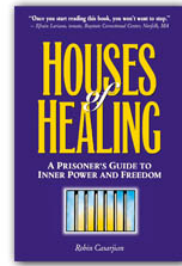
*Thanks to MAJR Monitors Deborah Friese and Patricia N. Marks for attending the meeting and providing these notes! Our moving illustration is by Chis Buzzeli and comes from **Tolerance** magazine. Follow this link to an excellent 2013 article.*

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## Facilitators Needed for Emotional Literacy Class at MCI-J.

**The Unitarian Universalist Church of Annapolis** sponsors weekly personal empowerment classes that include stress management, emotional literacy, forgiveness, and non-violent communication. The class is based upon the book

*Houses of Healing* by Robin Casarjian. Classes are held from 11:30-1:30 on Tuesdays at the **Maryland Correctional Institution-Jessup**. For more info: Caroline Hadley 410-849-2608; [cshadley11@gmail.com](mailto:cshadley11@gmail.com).



ORDER



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.

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