

MARYLAND ALLIANCE FOR JUSTICE REFORM

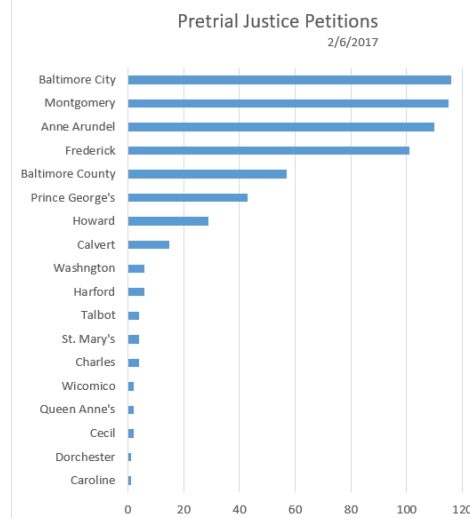
Working to end unnecessary incarceration and build strong, safe communities



Thanks for signing! We are impressed!

MAJR thanks you for signing the **petition to support the 2017 Maryland Pretrial – Justice Reinvestment Act (PJRA)**. On a base of 1000 active members, over 630 signatures have already been collected: an exceptional result in public campaigning!

MAJR will be delivering the packet of petitions to the Maryland Legislature and to Governor Hogan later this month [You can still **sign**]. We believe this evidence of support will make a significant difference in the decisions of your delegates and senators.



Again, many thanks!

As a further help, please forward this newsletter to **your legislators**.



MAJR General Meeting

MAJR held a general meeting on February 1, 2017 in Baltimore City. More than fifty friends attended our meeting. Led by Jerry McLaurin we discussed:

- Front Door: Pretrial Bail and Citations Reform, Petition
- Behind the Walls: Lifer's Parole, Solitary Confinement, Inmate Education
- Back Door: Expungement, Equal Access to Food

The group reviewed plans to support the legislation as each comes up for action in Annapolis.

For a complete report see: <http://www.ma4jr.org/majr-1-feb-2017/>

Our Legislative Calendar

We are nearly a month into the three month legislative session and things are popping! Below is a list of bills that have been introduced in the House and Senate, the bill number and sponsor, and the anticipated date of the next hearing. As things are happening fast these might already be out of date. We will try to update this table on our website: <http://www.ma4jr.org/legislation-2017-2/>

Initiative	House Bill	Senate Bill	Organization	Hearing
Pretrial/Bail	HB1157 Dumais	SB879 Kelly	MAJR	H:3/7 S:3/1
Pretrial Release	HB1390 Barron	SB880 Kelly	MAJR	H:3/7 S:3/1
Citations	HB408 Dumais	SB477 Kelly	MAJR	S:2/15
Allied Initiatives				
Employers of Ex-offenders	HB440 Cassilly	SB055 Cassilly	ACLU	H:2/21
Lifers Parole	HB723 Queen	SB694 McFadden	MRJI	H:2/14 S:2/15
Solitary- Limitations	HB1001 Moon	SB1015 Lee	IAHR	H:2/28 S:2/21
Equal Access to Food	HB860 Lierman	SB853 Madaleno	OfJ	H:2/21 S:3/9
Expungement – Nolle Prosequi		SB510 Norman	JOTF	S:2/15
Healthy Working Families	HB001 Clippinger	SB230 Middleton	JOTF	S:2/9 H:2/10
Fair Education Access	HB694 McIntosh	SB543 Conway	JOTF	H:2/14 S:2/15
Expungement – Unit Rule	HB840 Barron		JOTF	H:2/28
Related Initiatives				
Job Training & Education	HB459 Queen		CURE	H:2/14
Suspended Licence	HB844 Moon	SB799 Muse	OPD	H:2/15 S:2/22
Criminal Penalties	HB927 Morales		OPD	H:2/21

If you wish to support any of these initiatives with us, please attend a hearing and give testimony, and write or call **your legislators**.

Appeals Court Decides on Bail Reform

The highest court in Maryland delayed action on January 5th on whether to overhaul the state's moneybased bail system so that most poor defendants do not have to pay bail or are allowed to pay what they can afford. The Appeals Court agreed to meet again on this issue in February. And at that meeting on February 7th, they agreed to take action.

Amended Rule 4-216 is an important step to make sure that Commissioners and trial judges will not set money bail in amounts designed to keep defendants in pretrial detention only because they are too poor to pay a bail bondsman.

But, the Rule does not eliminate the need for legislation. The implementation of the Rule is dependent on the existence of a validated risk assessment tool. Yet only 6 out of 24 counties now have "risk assessment tools" and not all are validated; only 13 out of 24 counties have substantial pretrial release services programs. Legislation to give direction to the Executive branch is needed on the topic of risk assessment and pretrial release programs.

So far, two bills have been filed in the Maryland General Assembly seeking to provide guidance on risk assessment and pretrial release programs: **SB879/HB1157** (the MAJR bill) and **SB880/HB1390**.

1. **SB 880** calls on the State to adopt risk screening and to initiate plans for statewide pretrial services.
2. **SB 879** provides plans how pretrial release programs may be established via pilot programs and a "state pretrial resource center" that could provide counties with technical assistance and training; it also offers two other provisions seeking to reduce unnecessary pretrial detention— a) directing judges not to issue "no bond" bench warrants for minor violation of probation cases, and b) directing prosecutors to perform early screening (now delayed until close to the trial dates in many counties) so as to dismiss cases that are insufficient and to refer appropriate cases to diversion, if available, such as mental health treatment, substance abuse treatment, veterans care or mediation.

SB879 and **SB880** are compatible and the adoption of both would benefit Maryland taxpayers.

Help MAJR get these bills passed: **call your legislators** and urge them to support this legislation.

Prisoners Rights Advocacy Day

When: Thu, March 9, 9am – 2pm

Where: Lowe House Office Building, 6 Bladen Street, Room 318, Annapolis 21401



Sign up at: <https://goo.gl/forms/sdMotvdnZ4FjLwaL2>

Job Opportunities Task Force (JOTF) Lobby Day

When: Tue, March 28

Where: Annapolis Legislature

Let us join together in Annapolis to urge support for legislative initiatives that seek to advance reform in criminal justice, economic justice, environmental justice, and racial justice.

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!

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

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