

MARYLAND ALLIANCE FOR JUSTICE REFORM

Working to end unnecessary incarceration and build strong, safe communities



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2/21/2017

Chair Maggie McIntosh and the House Appropriations Committee
Chair Thomas M. Middleton and the Senate Finance Committee

Bill Numbers: HB860/SB853

Maryland Alliance for Justice Reform (MAJR) supports the “Supports for Ex-offenders Bill”—for various reasons:

- 1) The current Maryland policy regarding returning citizens previously convicted of a drug offense to receive food stamps or temporary cash assistance is irrationally punitive. Another returning citizen with a record of handgun offenses or other violent crimes, including murder, does not face such a handicap.
- 2) The current policy also is potentially counter-productive. Because a citizen with a past drug record may experience temporary unemployment, providing the same assistance available to others could mean the difference between continued law-abiding behavior or a return to crime, due to economic desperation.
- 3) Drug testing required for citizens with past drug convictions is duplicative and wasteful as anyone who has not successfully completed a sentence already will be required to comply with parole or probation-related drug testing. And, retailers who accept food stamps already are required to ensure that such benefits are not misused for nonfood items.