

MARYLAND ALLIANCE FOR JUSTICE REFORM

Working to end unnecessary incarceration and build strong, safe communities



Action Alert! Oppose Tough-on-Crime Legislation!

Now is the time of year when things get interesting! We need everyone's support right now to reach some of MAJR's objectives for this session of the Maryland Legislature.

The Senate soon will vote on SB 122 on the floor and, assuming it passes, the House will begin deliberations on it soon after. We ask you to contact your state legislators and ask them to vote *against* it.

To put this bill in perspective, 2018 is an election year, and our legislative leaders want to be seen as tough on crime. Tough is not the same as *smart* on crime. **We know that the contents of this bill will not make us safer.** SB 122 has three main flaws:

1. SB 122 ignores good legislative procedure. It combines useful funding measures with harmful prison-filling measures that should be considered separately. It was drafted and sent to the Senate floor without a public hearing.
2. It increases various criminal penalties, as if this will make Marylanders safer. But, both national studies and Pew's Maryland Justice Reinvestment review find that longer prison sentences without treatment do not reduce repeat offenses or make communities safer. See, e.g., <http://goccp.maryland.gov/jrcc/documents/jrcc-final-report.pdf>
3. The studies show that repeat offenses are reduced better by community-based drug treatment. But SB 122 prevents judges from ordering violent drug offenders into treatment prior to parole eligibility. A **2010 National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse report** found that 85% of prison inmates are "substance-abuse involved" and 78% of all violent crimes were committed by those "involved with alcohol or drugs."

Because most individuals eligible for parole are concerned with release as soon as possible, violent drug addicts are less likely to request and accept drug treatment under SB 122 and, thus, are more likely to return to their communities with untreated addiction. Thus, SB 122 ignores the advice of Maryland's Justice Reinvestment Council to "focus...treatment resources on high-risk offenders."

Please help defeat this bad bill. To see all the positive bills we are supporting, go to <http://www.ma4jr.org/legislation-2018/>.

For easy access to your legislators, go to <http://mdelect.net/> and put in your address. Click on the legislators' names for contact information.

Thanks very much! After the wonderful progressive legislation in recent years, let's not go backwards.

Call to Action: Solitary Confinement

MAJR joins with the ACLU in asking you to tell members of [Maryland's House Judiciary Committee](#) to support solitary confinement reform. Solitary confinement is cruel and should be unusual in Maryland. Instead, it's used at twice the national average. And in 2016 persons were spending an average of two months in "restrictive housing."

Please go to this link: <http://bit.ly/2t437ii> and fill out the form to send a message to the members of the Committee in support of the bill [HB 786](#).

For more information about this legislation see IAHR's [talking points](#) and MAJR's [testimony](#).

A MAJR "Smart on Crime" Campaign:

SAVE TAXPAYER DOLLARS — **VOTE TO SUPPORT** "The Front Door" because...
... Early action keeps low-risk offenders from becoming with higher-risk offenders

- Pretrial [\[HB480/SB484\]](#): eliminate inconsistent local fees that keep the poor in pretrial detention
- Pretrial [\[HB447/SB1156\]](#): use crime forfeiture funds for statewide race-neutral risk assessment and supervision
- Citations [\[HB323/SB248\]](#): use citations instead of arrests for simple possession of drugs

IMPROVE PUBLIC SAFETY — **VOTE TO SUPPORT** "Behind the Walls" improvements because...

...What happens inside prisons can make new offenses more likely

- Restrictive housing [\[HB323/SB248\]](#): reduce solitary confinement that worsens mental health and reoffenses
- Correctional education [\[HB291/SB1137\]](#): cut recidivism 50%—early identification of education and job-training needs

STRENGTHEN COMMUNITIES AND FAMILIES – **VOTE TO SUPPORT** "Back Door" measures because...

...When individuals leave prison they are 50% less likely to return if they find jobs

- Lifers parole [HB846/SB249]: ends Governor's parole veto of inmates with lowest risks and highest medical costs. See the Washington Post article "[Glendening, former Maryland governor, says he was wrong to deny 'lifers' early release.](#)"
- Employers' tax credits [HB476]: support returning citizens' honest work to support their families
- Expungement expansion [HB1383/SB1212]: give returning citizens a fair chance

SAVE TAXPAYER DOLLARS—**VOTE TO REJECT** ...

...Excessive sentences which cost \$38,000 per person per year to incarcerate

- Mandatory Sentences [HB100/SB199] eliminate incentives, increase costs and handcuff judges
- Mandatory Sentences [HB101/SB197] for weapons violations increase costs and handcuff judges
- Mandatory Sentences [HB102/SB198] for juveniles increase costs and handcuff judges
- Comprehensive Crime Bill of 2018 [SB 122] combines the disadvantages of those three bills!

Being "Smart on Crime" is proven more effective than old "Tough on Crime" tactics.

[Read the facts.](#)

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.

- We are 100% Maryland voters—statewide volunteers for bipartisan, evidence-based laws.
- We work with government (legislative, executive, judiciary) connecting experienced professionals with returning citizens and impacted communities to improve Maryland Criminal Justice corrections.
- Our primary focus is "Justice Reinvestment"—reducing incarceration and increasing rehabilitation with tax funds saved.

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