

MARYLAND ALLIANCE FOR JUSTICE REFORM

Working to end unnecessary incarceration and build strong, safe communities



To: Chair Bobby Zirkin & Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

March 1, 2018

From: Phil Caroom

Re: Support for SB 1134 – Juv. Justice Coordinating Council

Honorary Chairs

Robert Ehrlich
Former Governor

Stuart O. Simms
Former Secretary DPSCS

Executive Committee

Adrian Bishop
Stony Run Friends

Diamonte Brown
BCPS teacher

Philip Caroom
Retired Judge

Charles Chappell
*Former inmate; former
Manager for Correctional
Enterprises at JCI*

Candy Clark
Unitarian Universalist

Vince Greco
*Maryland C.U.R.E.
Out for Justice
JCI Prison Scholars Program
Extra-Legalese Group, Inc.*

Lea Green
Maryland C.U.R.E.

Jerry McLaurin
People for Change Coalition

Bob Rhudy
*Past Director of Mediation,
Court of Special Appeals*

Jim Rose
Patapsco Friends

Patience Schenck
Annapolis Friends

Currently, Maryland's Department of Juvenile Services (DJS) is supported by an Advisory Board (AB). But, the Juvenile Justice Coordinating Council (JJCC) would not duplicate the current AB's functions for three reasons:

- 1) JRCC's evidence-based, system-wide evaluation is not part of AB's function;
- 2) JRCC's membership brings in key stakeholders; and
- 3) JRCC's sunset after two years efficiently could identify new functions for AB's absorption in future years.

The AB statute (HS Art., sec.9-212, et seq.) generally calls for consideration of "needs" and "resources" to "improve services." But, comparable to the Justice Reinvestment Coordinating Council which provided crucial data for the adult criminal justice system, the JRCC explicitly calls for examination of:

- causes for recidivism;
- best practices;
- evidence-based practices;
- "restorative justice" and diversion programs;
- statistical reasons for dismissals without DJS service;
- and more.

JRCC also would bring stakeholders with daily involvement into the examination of Juvenile Justice dilemmas, including prosecutors, Public Defender representatives, victims and policy advocates.

JRCC's two year term would enable it to report promising new programs to the General Assembly, to DJS and to AB for follow-up; then, it would conclude its mission. The fiscal note suggests that GOCCP and DJS could incur staffing expenses of approximately \$100,000.

A 2015 DJS report acknowledged approximately 2,500 juveniles committed to custody in 2014—the large majority due to violations of probation after DJS had opportunities to provide community intervention.

Considering that current estimates for Maryland prison inmates run over \$38,000 per inmate per year, Maryland taxpayers will come out ahead if improved policies can prevent only 3 individuals from becoming adult prison inmates.

We can do better in Maryland for our juveniles and JJCC can help. For all these reasons, MAJR strongly urges the Committee to give a favorable report to SB 1134.

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NOTE: Phil Caroom submits this testimony on behalf of the Maryland Alliance for Justice Reform executive committee and not on behalf of the Maryland Judiciary.