

Action Alert - April 9, 2018

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MARYLAND ALLIANCE FOR JUSTICE REFORM

Working to end unnecessary incarceration and build strong, safe communities



Action Alert! Contact Your Maryland State Senator TODAY!

Action Request: Please contact your State Senator TODAY (lunch time) and ask them to SUPPORT HB447/SB1156. This the LAST DAY of the General Assembly, so please make contact by lunch time if possible. This bill will fund and expand pretrial services in Maryland, lowering costs and improving outcomes. This is the last day of the Maryland legislative session so there is no time to waste!

Dear Supporter of Maryland Alliance for Justice Reform (MAJR):

A sorely-needed bill -- HB 447 / SB 1156 -- supported by Maryland Courts and the Maryland Association of Counties (MACO) -- would provide seed-money for counties without pretrial release screening and supervision to adopt these programs, as well as assisting counties with current programs to upgrade to best-practices.

This pretrial bill passed on the floor of the House, but now must get the joint support of the two Senate committees. If a majority of the two committees approve, the bill will go to the floor of the Senate -- when we will ask everyone on our list to contact their Senators. But first, we urge you to call your Senator to support it in committee. Here are 3 talking points for your call:

1) Why should you care? Pretrial supervision can cut failure-to-appear (FTA) rates by half. This improvement saves both jail costs for taxpayers and wasted time for sheriffs and courts. For example, St. Mary's county's new pretrial supervision program made huge FTA improvements saving county taxpayer funds at the same time.

2) Scientific risk-screening also helps judges—many without pre-appointment criminal-practice experience—make more accurate, race-neutral, safe pretrial-release decisions.

3) The pretrial bill would bring consistency to all the counties, save taxpayers money, and better determine who is safe to release awaiting trial, who should be held, and who should go home under supervision.

The pretrial bill -- supported by Maryland Courts and the Maryland Association of Counties -- would provide seed-money for 13 Md. counties without pretrial release screening and supervision for 10 Md. counties without pretrial supervision to adopt these programs*, as well as assisting counties with current programs to upgrade to best-practices.

(*Statistics come from a November 2017 [Survey of Maryland Correctional Administrators](#)

Association (MCAA) in all 23 Md. counties with notes from Maryland Alliance from Justice Reform (MAJR).

Briefly, pretrial supervision means that someone who has been arrested is released but not cut off from the justice system until their trial date. This might mean a daily check-in at the low end to wearing an ankle bracelet at the high end. Evidence-based risk assessment involves using standard questions to determine whether the person is safe to release and is likely to show up for trial. Both processes lower the rate of expensive incarceration, which costs taxpayers and leads to job loss.

For contact information on your Maryland State Senator, go to www.mdelect.net and type in your address. Then click on the Senator's name. His or her page will also tell you which committee he or she serves on.

Many thanks for your help on this LAST DAY of the Maryland General Assembly!

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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Maryland Alliance for Justice Reform
351 Dubois Rd.
Annapolis, MD 21401

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