

MARYLAND ALLIANCE FOR JUSTICE REFORM

Working to end unnecessary incarceration and build strong, safe communities



2018 Maryland Legislative Session Summary

Criminal justice reform made good progress in the 2018 Maryland legislative session -- exceeding expectations for this election year! Here are some of the results:

Bills MAJR supported:

- Correctional Education - HB291 /SB1137 - **passed**
- Pretrial Services - HB447 /SB1156 - **passed**
- Juvenile Justice Coordinating Council - HB1524 /SB1134 - **passed**
- Second Chance Act - HB476 - **passed House only**
- Solitary Confinement - HB786 /SB539 - **passed House only**
- Pretrial Release (St. Mary's) - HB110 - **passed**
- Incompetence evaluations - HB111 /SB233 - **passed**
- Reproductive Justice - HB797 /SB598 - **passed**
- Pregnant Inmates - HB787 /SB629 – **passed**

Bills MAJR opposed:

- "Comprehensive Crime Bill"- SB122 - **not passed**
- 4 Death Penalty Bills - **not passed**

Governor's veto overridden (MAJR supported overriding):

- Ban-the-Box-for state colleges - Fair Education Access - HB694 /SB543 - **veto overridden**

This is the largest number of MAJR supported bills passed in a single session to date. These new statutes should lead Maryland to pretrial release that is quicker, less costly and nondiscriminatory, as well as better correctional education, juvenile, and pregnant-inmate policies!

MAJR members also should give ourselves credit for having presented a widely-publicized [Legislative Breakfast with former Governors Ehrlich \(R\) and Glendening \(D\)](#). Gov. Glendening made an important public plea to end the "Life-Means-Life" parole policy that he had initiated 20 years ago as Governor. MAJR posted an [online video of Glendening statement](#) and local news media covered it as well. Still, the Lifers' bill did not pass in 2018-- no surprise in an election year.

MAJR also, in 2018, began use of [Twitter](#) and continued [Facebook](#) to support voters' grassroots advocacy.

Most bills we opposed did not pass. BUT, there is one negative footnote: Unnoticed by MAJR and many other advocates until too late, the House Judiciary Committee amended crossover Senate Bill 101, originally related to expungement, and converted it into a somewhat watered-down version of a Governor's tough-on-crime bill. As amended and passed, SB 101 now creates a *mandatory* 10-year non-parole sentence for second convictions of crimes of violence and prevents judges from ordering drug evaluations or treatments prior to the defendants' time for parole. It is a minor consolation that a Public Defender survey suggests the potentially impacted population in 2017 would have been

less than 10 individuals.

This year, we also improved our ties with the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI-Md.), the Maryland Correctional Administrators Association (MCAA), other local advocacy groups, and the state prisons' reentry coordinator.

Next year, 2019, will be the first year for the State to account for money from Justice Reinvestment savings, making these available for better drug treatment and rehabilitation programs. We are well positioned to make still more progress towards shrinking both our prisons and the crime-rate!

On balance, congratulations to all whose visits, calls and emails contributed to these good 2018 results!

Watch for another newsletter soon for the date and place of our next general MAJR meeting, where we will assess our accomplishments and begin to set our priorities for 2019. Plan to bring your ideas!

Glendening, former Maryland Governor, says he was wrong to deny 'lifers' early release.



From the Baltimore Sun:

"Former Maryland Govs. Parris N. Glendening and Robert L. Ehrlich Jr., a Democrat and a Republican who have seldom in their long political careers been allies, came together Wednesday, March 7, to support criminal justice reform legislation in the General Assembly. The pair made a joint appearance at an event sponsored by the **Maryland Alliance for Justice Reform (MAJR)**, a group that advocates 'smart-on-crime' policies that seek to move away from the tougher approaches of past decades."

Gov. Ehrlich, who serves as honorary co-chair of MAJR, commented "You talk about the great purple issue of our time," Ehrlich said, referring to bipartisan support for criminal justice reform. "Its time has come."



Lobby Day

Over forty people registered for the MAJR lobby day on Wednesday, March 7th. We had great attendance and active participation by this group of Marylanders committed to advancing the cause of 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!

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