

MARYLAND ALLIANCE FOR JUSTICE REFORM

Working to end unnecessary incarceration and build strong, safe communities



We are aware that you have received election advice from many sources. We want to bring to your attention another decision many of you will be making on June 26th, election day: who will you vote for for your **State's Attorney**?

State's Attorneys in Maryland are accountable to you, the public, and are elected to their position every four years. How much information is available for you to make the decision? Are the candidates for the office of State's Attorney in your county "tough on crime" or are they "smart on crime"?

According to Fordham University law professor John Pfaff*, prosecutors are the single most important factor in the increase of prison populations. They tend to file charges even when the evidence suggests that someone should go free and generally pursue the harshest sentence they can get. Nearly 95 percent of the cases that prosecutors decide to prosecute end up with the defendant pleading guilty.

To help with your decision MAJR sent a questionnaire to each of the candidates for State's Attorney. They were asked six questions:

1. **In your opinion is there a difference between being "tough on crime" and being "smart on crime"? Please explain.**
2. **Should minor offenses be decriminalized, resulting in fines instead of jail time?**
3. **Do you favor using pretrial risk assessment? Will you recommend pretrial supervision?**
4. **Would you work to expand criminal diversions in which willing victims and offenders are offered mediation?**
5. **Would you support reentry programs to improve employment opportunities for inmates returning from state prison sentences?**
6. **Would you support mental health screening and treatment of pretrial detainees?**

To see their answers just click on the summary page: <http://www.ma4jr.org/states-attorney/> and then click on the link to your jurisdiction. Not all candidates responded. But a non-response may be just as significant.

Please vote.

* John F. Pfaff (2017). *Locked In: The True Causes of Mass Incarceration and How to Achieve Real Reform*. New York: Basic Books.

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.

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