

MARYLAND ALLIANCE FOR JUSTICE REFORM

Working to end unnecessary incarceration and build strong, safe communities



HELP!

We have made significant progress towards reducing mass incarceration in Maryland in the past few years, yet there still is much that needs to be done. With our state's 2016 Justice Reinvestment Act (JRA), state prison populations were reduced nearly 10% in the past year alone— with a portion of savings

directed to preventive and rehabilitative services instead.

MAJR and our advocacy partner organizations have made major advances in our agenda for Maryland this year. **The list of eight** bills passed (including one for which a veto was overridden) is the largest number of MAJR supported bills passed in a single session. These new statutes should lead Maryland to implement 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). Former Governor Glendening made an important public plea to end the "Life-Means-Life" parole policy that he initiated 20 years ago. MAJR also began more active social media to encourage voters' grassroots advocacy.

MAJR needs your help. What issues are most important to you? And how should JRA funds best be spent? Drug abuse reportedly impacts 65% of those arrested. Mental health problems are estimated to affect up to 40% of those awaiting trials in our jails. Screening, treatment and mediation could reduce the intake of citizens into our prisons which, in the U.S., still are filled at nearly 5 times the rate of other nations. Are these your issues? Do you have other concerns to bring forward?

Now What?

That's up to you.

MAJR will host a general planning session on Friday, September 14. We need your advice on how best to craft our initiatives for the next legislature.

The "Front Door" working group will be addressing issues facing citizens who are yet to be incarcerated. The "Behind the Walls" working group focuses on conditions within Maryland's prisons and detention centers. The "Back Door" working group pays attention to what happens to those who are released and have reentered society.

Join our working groups by attending the upcoming meetings below, or just email your suggestions. Attend our General Meeting on September 14. Help us set our agenda for 2019!

Working Group	Date	Location	email
"Front Door"	9/5/2018 7pm	Annapolis Friends Meeting	frontdoor@ma4jr.org
"Behind the Walls"	8/20/2018 7pm	Owen Brown Interfaith	behindwalls@ma4jr.org

		Center	
"Back Door"	8/27/2018 7pm	Annapolis Friends Meeting	backdoor@ma4jr.org
General Meeting	9/14/2018 7pm	Sacred Heart of Jesus, Balto.	info@ma4jr.org

Highlights from the July Meeting of the Justice Reinvestment Oversight Board

The Justice Reinvestment Oversight Board met on July 26, 2018, and intrepid MAJR reports Deborah Friese and Patricia Marks were there. PowerPoints and summaries from some of the presentations can be found on the Board's [website](#). At the time of the newsletter, minutes have not yet been posted. A few key notes follow.



Court-ordered Placements for Persons with Behavioral Health Issues

The JRA requires the Maryland Department of Health to track orders for treatment of substance use disorders, which must be requested by prisoners. An initial evaluation must be completed within 7 days and placement within 221 days. Dr. Barbara Bazron reported that **448 individuals have been admitted into treatment and 62 have successfully completed treatment since October 1**. Those who are unsuccessful in treatment, which is not unusual, get another try. Treatment will continue regardless of Medicaid coverage.

Geriatric and Medical Parole

A member reported that there have been only two cases of geriatric parole that are eligible according to legislative criteria. Members saw a need to understand why this is so and make recommendations for legislative changes as appropriate. Likewise, there has been a decrease in requests for medical parole.



Navigators: Supporting Returning Citizens

Navigators provide a link for returning citizens to help them find employment and support for their families, as well as housing. To date, two navigators have been identified and three more are needed.

The Division of Licensing within the Maryland Department of Labor, Licensing, and Regulation (DLLR) has five committees to help remove barriers that can keep returning citizens from getting licenses to work in fields where they are required.

The DLLR also reported it has received a \$1.9 million grant to train 18 recovery

support specialists to help address the opioid epidemic. The grant also provides seed money for programs.

Some Data are Hard to Come By

Information on pre-trial services available across the state is difficult to get due to variations among the 23 Maryland counties. Ceilings need to be developed for the number of people awaiting trial who can be released and supervised. Board members heard that serious medical issues in the population are not being addressed. “Summits” on pre-trial issues are being held in each county and numerous meetings and conversations have occurred. Judges are receiving training to help them report required information.

Encouraging Performance Measures

Angelina Guarino of the **Governor's Office of Crime Control & Prevention of Maryland** reported that the statewide prison population is down and the post-JRA detention population is also trending downward. Statewide pretrial detention is steady.

MAJR is a nonpartisan association of over fifty 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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