

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"	7/23/2018 7pm	Owen Brown Interfaith	behindwalls@ma4jr.org

		Center	
"Back Door"	7/23/2018 7pm	Owen Brown Interfaith Center	backdoor@ma4jr.org
General Meeting	9/14/2018 7pm	(to be announced)	info@ma4jr.org



Summary of the June 4, 2018 meeting of the Commission on the School to Prison Pipeline and Restorative Practices

The meeting focused on the provision of services intended to keep students safe.

The first presentation was on **Maryland Safe to Learn Legislation**. Jon E. Carrier of the Maryland Association of School Resource Officers and Edward Clarke, Executive Director of the Maryland Center for School Safety, focused on the implementation of the Safe to Learn Acts, which was signed into law by Governor Hogan.

The law restructures the Maryland Center for School Safety. It requires that the use of force by School Resource Officers and security personnel is tracked, creates model threat assessment policy, and requires that each local school system develop safety policies and complete safety evaluations. The legislation is modeled after the legislation created by Virginia, which did this work after the shooting at Virginia Tech.

Some members of the Commission voiced concerns that the legislation focuses too much on intervention rather than prevention and that the focus is on extreme acts of violence rather than school culture and climate. In response the presenters stated that the focus is also on prevention. The presenter spoke of the role of School Resource Officer as mentor, counselor, and educator. He noted that training for School Resource Officers includes information on bullying, gangs, social media awareness, trauma informed care, adolescent development, and mental health awareness.

The second presentation was by Akil Hamm, Baltimore City Schools Police Chief. Unlike all other jurisdictions in Maryland, Baltimore City does not have a contractual arrangement between the schools and police department/sheriff's office for safety personnel; Baltimore City Schools have created their own police force. This police force focuses on criminal, not disciplinary, behaviors. This year there were 58 arrests compared with 970 arrests in 2007 (before the creation of the School Police). Chief Hamm noted that the focus is on de-escalation, prevention, and diversion whenever possible. Police are there for police matters, NOT routine disciplinary behaviors of students. All officers are trained in restorative justice practice. Open Society did some of the training. Also, the Baltimore School District has a trainer who focuses on prevention and diversion.

The next meeting of the Commission will be held August 14, 2018, with working groups meeting in the interim.

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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