

MARYLAND ALLIANCE FOR JUSTICE REFORM

Working to end unnecessary incarceration and build strong, safe communities



MAJR General Meeting

Tuesday, November 27th from 6:00pm to 9:00pm

Prince George's County Education Association
8008 Marlboro Pike, Forestville Maryland 20747



6pm: Potluck - please bring something to share

7pm: General Meeting



MAJR will hold a General Meeting to plan for the 2019 legislature

Among the potential initiatives and concerns which we will hear about:

- JRA funding;

- Citations in lieu of arrest;
- School-to-prison pipeline;
- Mental health screening and diversion;
- Solitary confinement;
- Correctional education;
- Books in prison;
- Families of the incarcerated;
- Juvenile lifers;
- Reentry coordination;
- Pre-release housing for women;
- Certificates of rehabilitation;
- Cost of incarceration;
- Mental health self-help groups.

To see a more detailed explanation of these initiatives see <https://www.ma4jr.org/initiatives-2019>

The Justice Reinvestment Advisory Board Meets:

Members heard an update on JRA implementation. The inmate population is down about 6% (mostly due to reductions in those incarcerated before trial). The population is expected to decrease for 5 years and then level off.

Local Programs Vary Widely

A review of local programming found disparities in access to key programs among counties. Jail addiction services is the most prevalent service provided across the state.

Incarcerated Women Need Relevant Programs

A representative of victims of sexual assault asserted that 85% of women in prison are there for prostitution or drugs. The prisons don't have programs that get to the root of their problems.



Maryland to Switch to NIBRS Soon

The group heard an update on data collection standards, and it learned that the Uniform Crime Report will soon be replaced by the National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS), which follows Federal guidelines. NIBRS will now be able to collect information on race and ethnicity.

See the complete report at: <https://www.ma4jr.org/advisory-board-10-18-2018/>

Justice Reinvestment Oversight Board Meets:



At its meeting on November 20, the Oversight Board heard the **current projected savings from reduced incarceration**. The amount of savings is based on the difference in expenditure between October 1 2017 and October 1 2018. The exact amount is still being calculated, but the Budget Committee told the board that the final savings will be between 3.5 and 4.25 million dollars. The Justice Reinvestment Act requires that *up to* 50 percent of this money be set aside to fund grants as recommended by the Board. (MAJR will be lobbying to ensure that maximum funds are available!)

The Board spent the majority of the remaining time listening to descriptions of two programs that might be targeted to receive grants. Judge Long, the Board Chair, reminded members that 95 percent of people held in prisons and jails will be released. What are the best strategies to keep them from re-offending?

The District Court Reentry Project (DCREP), a court-initiated program located in Baltimore and fueled by the efforts by volunteers, began in 2015 through the efforts of Associate Judge Nicole Pastore Klein. The program which offers jobs to people referred by the court on a “rolling” basis, was described in a 2017 issue of the [University of Baltimore Law Review](#). All 28 judges on the City bench are now participating in the program, and there are 4 specially assigned probation agents in Baltimore City.

The Board also heard a description of the [Gatekeepers](#) program in Hagerstown, Maryland. Director Bill Gaertner explained that the program – which begins one year prior to release - includes mentoring, coaching, and support for people seeking employment. It relies on a strong community collation for success.

For a more complete report on this meeting [click here](#). Thanks to Barbara Thomas and Susannah Rose for this report.

Support the Federal FIRST STEP Act.



The FIRST STEP Act will begin to ensure that people have the support they need to come home from prison job ready. It will:

Ban the shackling of women during childbirth and provide sanitary napkins and tampons at no charge;

- Give thousands of men and women an opportunity to earn their way home sooner (by fixing “Good Time Credits” retroactively);
- Get people who have participated in life-changing programs out of federal prison earlier and into halfway homes or home confinement;

- Require the Bureau of Prisons to place incarcerated people within 500 driving miles of their families;
- Allow formerly incarcerated people to serve as volunteers and mentors;
- Expand compassionate release, giving the elderly and terminally ill prisoners a pathway home.

The provisions in the bill would expand life-changing classes for thousands of men and women in federal prison and prepare them to come home job-ready with the skills and support they need to succeed.

Let's help change.org and [sign the petition](#) to pass this legislation.

Reports of note:

- [A Guide to Employer Liability in Maryland:](#)
Principles of Agency and Negligent Hiring
Prepared by the [Job Opportunities Task Force](#) and the [Homeless Person's Representation Project](#)
- [Study on Alternatives to Incarceration](#)
Maryland State Commission on Criminal Sentencing Policy Presentation

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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