

## MARYLAND ALLIANCE FOR JUSTICE REFORM

Working to end unnecessary incarceration and build strong, safe communities



Join us in Annapolis to urge our legislators to support critical initiatives.

**Register NOW** for this event to reserve your space.

### When do we lobby?

Wednesday, March 6

10:15am - 1:00pm

### Where do we meet?

House Office Building Room 142

6 Bladen St, Annapolis, MD 21401

9:30 -10:00 Lobby Day check-in and seating: Bagels, fruit, coffee & juice

10:00-10:45 Lobby Day presentation, partnering, practice

10:45-12:30 Visit offices of legislators

12:30 Return with feedback

MAJR will supply fact sheets and talking points. Legislators and their staff will be expecting you.

Among the initiatives we will be pursuing are:

**SUPPORT:** [Pretrial Mental Health Screening](#) - An estimated 39 percent of Marylanders in pretrial detention suffer from mental illness, but counties don't have a standardized system of screening to identify them for early treatment. [HB306](#)|[SB402](#). See our issue brief on [Mental Health Screening](#).

**SUPPORT:** [Citations in lieu of arrest](#) for simple possession - Stopped for speeding? If an

officer finds suspected drugs but no other problem, today he must arrest and tow you. This bill would provide the option for a citation for simple possession. [HB280|SB341](#). See our issue brief on [Citations](#).

**SUPPORT:** [Correctional Education](#) - Education is a better, less costly and proven means of reducing recidivism. [HB294/SB621](#). See our Issue Brief on [Education Credits](#).

**SUPPORT:** [Women's Pre-Release Center](#) - Most women in Maryland prisons are from Baltimore, but the State closed its successful pre-release program that permitted easier return to the community. Let's get it reopened. [HB715|HB419](#). See the [Fact Sheet](#) from Out-for-Justice.

**SUPPORT:** [Removing the Governor's veto of parole](#) - 47 of 50 U.S. states do not permit a Governor to veto the evidence-based decisions of Parole professionals. Help Maryland join more progressive parole including Life sentences. [HB443|SB121](#).

[Register NOW for this event to reserve your space](#). Click [HERE](#) to register!

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## Women's Pre-Release Symposium



On Monday, January 28, 2019, Out For Justice ([OFJ](#)) facilitated the Women's Pre-release Unit Symposium at the Maryland House of Delegates, in conjunction with the Job Opportunity Taskforce ([JOTF](#)), American Civil Liberties Union ([ACLU-Maryland](#)), and the Maryland Justice Project ([MJP](#)). Over 40 participants were present on behalf of a variety of organizations. Including participants from the Maryland Alliance for Justice Reform's [Front Door](#), [Behind the Walls](#), and [Back Door Workgroups](#).

Pre-release status gives inmates a chance to connect with community resources and prepare themselves for transition back into the community upon release. Currently, the state of Maryland operates several pre-release centers and minimum-security facilities for men, while no comparable units exist for women. In 2009, Maryland closed its only stand-alone women's pre-release center and moved its services to the Maryland Correctional Institute of Women (MCI-W). At MCI-W, women on pre-release status are co-housed with women on maximum security status. Women do not experience a comparable process that the state provides for male inmates on pre-release status.

The symposium closed with a heart-wrenching account of formerly incarcerated women and men's lived experience on pre-release status in Maryland. Many women left correctional facilities ill-prepared for their reentry back home and to the workforce. For more information about the Women's Pre-Release facility see the [OFJ Women's Pre-Release Fact Sheet](#)

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# Savings from the Justice Reinvestment Act (JRA) Begins to Flow to Communities



The **Justice Reinvestment Oversight Board** held its 9th meeting on Friday January 25, 2019. The Justice Reinvestment Oversight Board was established in **Chapter 515** to be housed within the Governor's Office of Crime Control and Prevention. The Board is charged with monitoring the progress and compliance with the implementation of the recommendations of the Justice Reinvestment Coordinating

Council and Chapter 515.

The most exciting news presented was the announcement of savings realized by the reduction in the Maryland prison population of \$3.78 million. The Justice Reinvestment Act provides for the use of these funds to reduce crime and recidivism. The Local Government Justice Reinvestment Commission, in which each Maryland county is represented, is charged with making recommendations regarding grants to local governments and creating measures to assess the effectiveness of the grants. The Board heard that over the next few months, the Governor's Office of Crime Control and Prevention will be issuing a series of Notice of Fund Availability (NOFA) to fund such grants. The group heard two presentations: the Unger Reentry Project, led by the Justice Policy Institute, and the Geriatric Parole Process, presented by staff of the Maryland Parole Commission. Both presentations offered encouraging news about low rates of recidivism based on the provision of reentry support services.

The meeting concluded with updates from the many organizations involved in justice reinvestment including the Department of Health, Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation, Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services, Maryland Parole Commission, Local Detention Centers, the Public Defender, Administrative Office of the Courts, Governor's Office of Crime Control and Prevention. Watch the Board's **website** for specific meeting minutes and presentation materials.

Thanks to MAJR Monitor Patricia Marks for this article. If you would like to join the Marvelous MAJR Monitors and cover important meetings for our newsletter, contact Susannah Rose at **[susanhillrose@gmail.com](mailto:susanhillrose@gmail.com)**. The more monitors we have to notify about upcoming meetings, the better luck we have finding someone who can be there.

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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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