

MARYLAND ALLIANCE FOR JUSTICE REFORM

Working to end unnecessary incarceration and build strong, safe communities



MAJR General Meeting

Tuesday, September 24th from 6:00pm to 9:00pm

Frederick Unitarian Universalist Church

4880 Elmer Derr Road Frederick, Maryland 21703



6pm: Potluck - please bring something to share

7pm: General Meeting:

- Introductions
- **Senator Michael J. Hough (R)**
- **Delegate Karen Lewis Young (D)**
- 2019 MAJR Report Card
- Reentry Roundtable Report
- 2020 Vision and Mission
- 2020 Initiatives
- ...and more...!

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Our Vision for Maryland

We seek a State of Justice

- **We seek a Maryland that actively pursues alternatives to incarceration in treatment, mediation, and diversion programs. We expect fair and equal treatment under the law.**
 - We need crime prevention that engages the complex and pervasive causes of crime, which often are rooted in social and economic injustice. We support a system that is not biased by race, immigration status, or economic class and treats juveniles as children, not as adults.
- **We seek a Maryland that uses incarceration as an opportunity to rehabilitate, to restore, to reform, not as a punishment.**
 - Our Maryland ensures that prisons and detention facilities provide humane conditions and basic rights. Physical and mental health are primary concerns. We stand against the inappropriate use of solitary confinement
- **We seek a Maryland that integrates returning citizens into our vibrant communities with retraining, work opportunities, and restoration of their full rights and obligations.**
 - Our communities and families are strengthened by a system that embraces restorative justice. Victims are protected, families are supported, neighborhoods are safe, and the taxpayers' burden is reduced.

Our vision: Maryland is a State of Justice.

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Help us make our vision clear. [Email your comments and suggestions](#)



A Look Back at 2019 Initiatives and Forward with 2020 Vision

Together we began a movement towards reducing mass incarceration in Maryland with our state's 2016 Justice Reinvestment Act (JRA). But gaps in all parts of our criminal justice system remain which we seek to correct each year. Mental health was our major focus area in 2019 and reentry may be our major focus area in 2020.

Our 2019 Report Card: Despite 2019's crop of rookie legislators and a new chair for the House Judiciary Committee, MAJR and its allies made progress in the 2019 Maryland General Assembly with seven supported bills passed and a couple almost passed. See our [Legislative Summary](#)

Most notably, as requested by our 2018 NAMI/MAJR pretrial [mental health focus group](#), mental health assessments were added to the State's plan for opioid screening and will now be performed on all pretrial inmates. The new approach will begin with four Maryland counties in 2020, then expand to all Maryland counties by 2023.

Our 2020 plans-in-progress: MAJR's executive committee recommends a half-dozen initiatives to continue our campaign for a more just and effective Maryland criminal justice system.

- To improve [prison education programs](#) proven to substantially reduce recidivism (passed Senate 2019)
- To permit [citations, rather than arrest](#), for simple possession of drugs (passed House 2018), when neither overdose nor other concerns are present
- To depoliticize [parole for Life](#) cases (passed House 2018)
- To further reduce Maryland's overuse of [solitary confinement](#) that endangers inmates mental health (some measures passed 2019)

Another new initiative under discussion addresses Maryland's outdated ["felony-murder doctrine."](#) Today that doctrine threatens an accomplice with a

life sentence for homicide committed by another person, even if the accomplice didn't approve or participate. Currently, we estimate hundreds of "Lifers" convicted as juveniles sit in Maryland prisons due to this doctrine. The doctrine has now been abandoned in Great Britain (where it originated), Canada, Wales, Northern Ireland, and a number of U.S. states.

See our [2020 Initiatives](#). Is your concern not on this list? [Let us know now.](#)



Reentry Roundtable

The Maryland Alliance for Justice Reform (MAJR) hosted the first annual Maryland Reentry Roundtable Collaborative to bring more than one hundred advocates, policymakers, providers, and government stakeholders from across the state together to devise solutions for implementing seamless reentry.

The invitation-only event took place on Monday, September 16, 2019 at Westminster Hall located on the campus of the University of Maryland King Carey Law School. The day featured a series of panel discussions and strategy sessions on prisoner reentry and the need to build collaborative partnerships across organizations.

Come to the MAJR General Meeting on September 24 to hear a summary of the Reentry Roundtable.

Kirwan Commission

MAJR supports the recommendations of the Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education (a.k.a, The Kirwan Commission) as they will have a substantial positive impact on our goal of ending the inequities in our justice system. By supplying more resources to schools in concentrated areas of poverty, providing early childhood education, increasing career readiness training, and a restorative rather than punitive school discipline model; we can break the cycle of poverty and reduce the flow into prisons.



We encourage our members to attend one of the community forums an education reform coalition called "Blueprint for Maryland's Future" is holding all across Maryland over the next 8 weeks. These forums will include both education about the work of the Commission and opportunities to interact. Visit <https://marylandblueprint.org> to find out more and register for an event near you!

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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