

MARYLAND ALLIANCE FOR JUSTICE REFORM

Working to end unnecessary incarceration and build strong, safe communities



MAJR General Meeting

Monday, November 4th from 6:00pm to 8:30pm



Living Classrooms

Broadway Overlook Community Center

1501 E Fayette St. (between N. Caroline & Dallas St.)

Baltimore 21231



6pm: Potluck - please bring something to share

7-8:30pm: General Meeting:

- Introductions
 - 2020 Vision and Mission
 - 2020 Initiatives
 - ...and more...!
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A Look 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 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Another new initiative under discussion addresses Maryland's outdated **"felony-murder doctrine."** Today that doctrine threatens an accomplice with a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](#).

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 ending the 'school-to-prison' pipeline.



On October 14 StrongSchoolsMaryland sent the following report:

Today, the Kirwan Commission Funding Formula Work Group took a big step toward achieving a world-class education for all Maryland students. The Work Group proposed an updated public school funding formula and phase-in plan that fully funds all of the Kirwan recommendations and significantly increases the amount of money every school district receives under current law.

We want to be clear - we are in a generation defining moment for our public schools. Don't let anyone tell you we can't afford it, they are wrong. What we can't afford is to perpetuate the failed policies that have left fewer than 40% of Maryland high school graduates college and career ready.

For more information

see: <https://www.strongschoolsmaryland.org/home>



Our Vision for Maryland

We seek a State with Justice for All

- **At the front door of Maryland's criminal justice system, Maryland actively pursues alternatives to incarceration in treatment, mediation, and diversion programs. Fair and equal treatment under the law is afforded to all persons**
 - Crime prevention engages the complex and pervasive causes of crime, which often are rooted in social and economic injustice. The criminal justice system is not biased by race, immigration status, or economic class and treats juveniles as children, not as adults.
- **Behind the walls Maryland's correctional system uses incarceration as an opportunity to rehabilitate, to restore, to reform, not as a punishment.**
 - Maryland ensures that prisons and detention facilities provide humane conditions and basic rights. Physical and mental health are primary concerns. Solitary confinement is used appropriately and only as a last resort.
- **At the back door of Maryland's criminal justice system, Maryland integrates returning citizens into our vibrant communities with retraining, work opportunities, and restoration of their full rights and responsibilities.**
 - 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 Mission in Maryland

MAJR is a diverse broad-based state-wide advocacy organization focused on criminal justice reform that:

- Discerns needs from nationally-recognized studies, stakeholders' input, and impacted persons' voices.
- Advocates for legislative reforms of Maryland's criminal justice system that emphasize rehabilitation and restorative justice over mass incarceration and punishment.
- Creates opportunities for those committed to criminal justice reform to meet, share resources, and engage with each other around common purposes.
- Raises awareness and understanding, among citizens of Maryland, of mass incarceration and promotes positive alternatives.

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

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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