

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



6:00 - Potluck dinner - please bring something to share.

7:00 - Welcome: What is MAJR?

7:10 - Introductions

7:20 - Business items

- Vision/Mission

- Reentry Roundtable Report

- Executive Committee Changes

7:30 - MAJR 2020 Initiatives

- Front Door Agenda

- Back Door Agenda

- Behind the Walls Agenda

8:35 - Your Suggestions?

8:45 - Open discussion

9:00 - Adjournment, Clean up.



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Another new initiative under discussion addresses Maryland's outdated "**felony-murder doctrine**."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.**

Task Force to Study Crime Classification and Penalties



The **task force** held its first public meeting on Tuesday, October 29th. They are **charged** with reviewing the classification of all criminal and civil violations in the Maryland Code, and to recommend improvements. Unlike other States, Maryland has an unwieldy way of organizing its understanding of both civil and criminal offenses. Why, for example, is an attack on a horse considered more severe than some felonies? Why, if someone dies as a result of a felony, anyone who participated in that felony is ruled as guilty as a killer—even if they themselves didn't kill, didn't foresee the killing, and never meant to kill anyone?

The task force is made up of 3 State Senators, 3 State Delegates, and 8 others representing both the Public Defender's office, the prosecutors, and university scholars. Now chaired by Senator Mary Washington the task force will meet again on November 19th, and MAJR will be there to monitor and report on the

proceedings.

The full report can be found [here](#).



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.
- Educates and 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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