

MARYLAND ALLIANCE FOR JUSTICE REFORM

Working to end unnecessary incarceration and build strong, safe communities



Rollout of Vaccine to Maryland Prisons and Jails

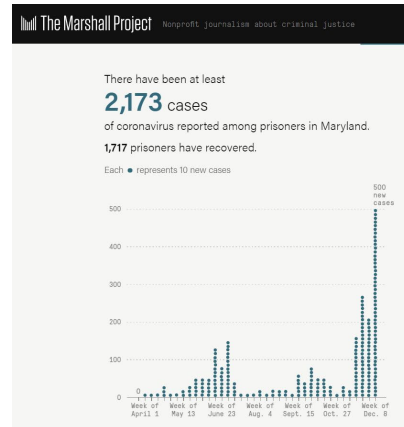
Prisons and jails (“detention centers” in Maryland terminology) are **dangerously difficult** for the kind of “social distancing” and “personal protective equipment” needed to minimize COVID-19 risks: Cell blocks, communal bathrooms, cafeteria, and other facilities are designed to hold large numbers of prisoners in comparatively confined spaces.

Making matters worse, correctional officers and staff can’t shelter in place, but daily come and go from their home communities – including COVID hot spots and at risk populations. Adequate medical care, **testing**, and protective equipment clearly should be provided..

The problem **particularly is acute** for older prisoners with medical problems whose likelihood of death, if infected, is greatest. It is **well-documented in Maryland** that the older and more medically-challenged a prisoner is, the smaller the danger they present to the public from new offenses.

Fortunately the State has announced that people in Prisons, Jails, Detention Centers and staff are among six priority groups to receive the vaccine in Maryland’s **Phase 1 distribution**. “Phase 1a includes health care workers and the most vulnerable long-term care residents,” Maryland Health Department spokesman Charles Gischlar said Friday of the highest priority target groups, which also includes first responders. “We expect subsequent allotments to quickly arrive in the state, enabling us to move into phase 1b, which **includes vulnerable inmates**.”

For more information **[read this article in Maryland Matters](#)**.



The Baltimore City State’s Attorney’s Office Creates Sentencing Review Unit

Baltimore City State’s Attorney Marylyn Mosby created a new Sentencing Review Unit to



review cases for possible release for those convicted in Baltimore City. That review will focus on:

- Persons with serious medical conditions threatened by COVID;
- persons over 60 years who have spent 25 or more years on a life sentence; and
- persons who have served 25 years or more for offense committed as juvenile.

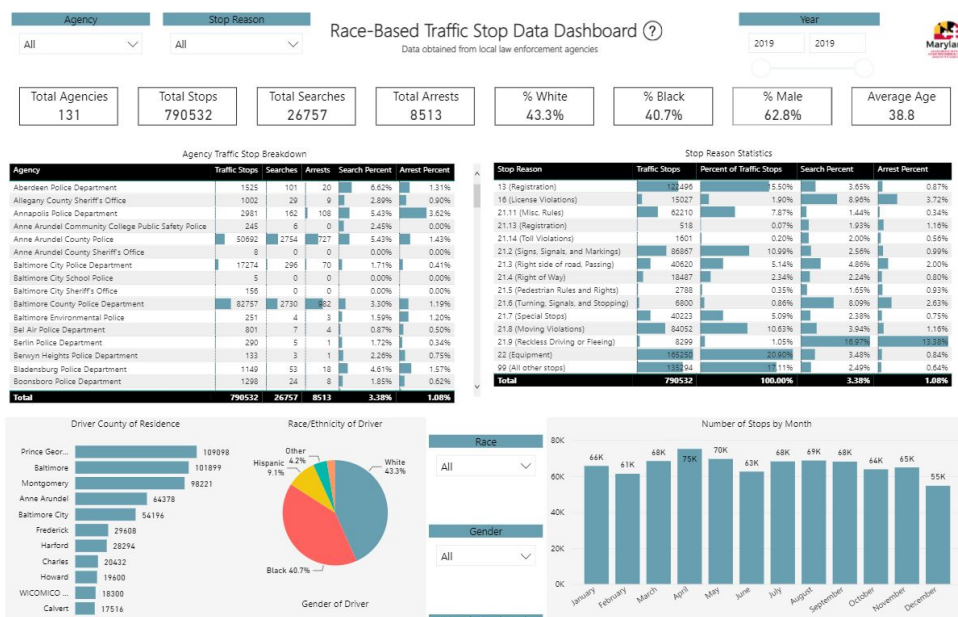
See the [announcement here](#). Read the [fact sheet here](#). [How to apply](#).

While some other Maryland counties' States Attorney have expedited pretrial release and non-jail sentences for minor offenses due to the COVID-pandemic, no other county has such a system to seek release for those nearer the end of longer prison sentences. Such programs are likely

- to reduce the impact of the COVID-pandemic in our prisons, and
- to save taxpayers over \$40,000 per year for each release.

Since it has been demonstrated that elderly returning citizens have less than a 3% chance of new offenses, public safety is not a major concern.

You can make a difference! If you are NOT a Baltimore City resident, consider a call or email to your State's Attorney asking him or her to adopt a similar release program. If you are a resident of Baltimore City, [email Ms. Mosby](#) and congratulate her for her initiative.



Race-Based Traffic Stop Data Dashboard

The Governor's Office of Crime Control and Prevention is required to post race-based traffic stop data in a location easily accessible to the public, and the public must be able to easily filter the data collected during the prior year. The Race-Based Traffic Stop Data Dashboard includes traffic stop data from 131 law enforcement agencies in Maryland collected during the 2019 calendar year and allows users to select one or more data measures to view results.

Looking at the dashboard shows that Black motorists in Maryland are stopped and searched by police at higher rates than their white counterparts, despite being less likely in many jurisdictions to be found with illicit drugs or other contraband. What does this data say about the police where you live?



Action Alerts!

We are about three weeks from the beginning of the legislative session in Annapolis. Soon after the season begins on January 13th, we expect legislators to take a vote to override the Governor's veto of bills which passed both houses of the Assembly. They need a full 60% of both houses to do so.

Just before their vote we will be asking you to contact your representatives in Annapolis to take action on three bills:

- (1) **Blueprint for Maryland's Future** (HB1300/SB1000), which implements the substantial public education reforms suggested by the Kirwan Commission.
- (2) **Womens' Pre-release Facility** (HB801/SB684), which would help the women in Maryland prisons benefit from employment and reentry services.
- (3) **Automatic Expungement** (HB83/SB699)(HB1336/SB589), which would clear the records of our returning citizens who were imprisoned for misdemeanors that today would not entail a prison sentence.

Stay tuned for our next email!

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.

Visit: <http://www.ma4jr.org>

Facebook: <https://facebook.com/ma4jr.org/>

Twitter: [@ma4jreform](https://twitter.com/ma4jreform)



Copyright © 2020 Maryland Alliance for Justice Reform, All rights reserved.

Want to change how you receive these emails?
You can **update your preferences** or **unsubscribe from this list**

