



Maryland Alliance for Justice Reform

Dear Senator

Unfortunately Governor Hogan vetoed important legislation that passed the House and the Senate in 2020. With the Maryland Alliance for Justice Reform (MAJR) I urge you to vote to override those vetoes.

Three critical bills include:

(1) The Womens' Pre-release Facility (HB801/SB684) which would help the women in Maryland prisons benefit from employment and reentry services.

The ONLY prerelease opportunities currently offered to women inmates are located in Jessup, Anne Arundel County, nearly 20 miles from the Baltimore and functionally disconnected from the City's public transportation system. Thanks to a short-sighted decision to close a center for women a decade ago to save money, the only services currently offered to women are found within the Maryland Correctional Institute for Women. Meanwhile, there are five facilities for men. Can't we have just one solely for women as well?

(2) The Blueprint for Maryland's Future (HB1300/SB1000) which implements the substantial public education reforms suggested by the Kirwan Commission.

This bill was vetoed in May by the Governor who stated concerns about the expense during the COVID crisis. However, we question whether a veto was necessary, since the Blueprint bill already contains a "pause button" that delays implementation in any year in which state revenues declined by 7.5% or more over the previous year (HB1300:19(b)). [ma4jr.org/strong-schools/]

The Blueprint is indispensable for equalizing school resources for children in disadvantaged communities. It will help to end the 'school-to-prison pipeline' with alternatives to suspension or expulsion and with job-training for those unable to attend college.

(3) The Automatic Expungement bills (HB83/SB699)(HB1336/SB589) clears the records of returning citizens who were imprisoned for misdemeanors that today would not entail a prison sentence.

Despite Governor Hogan's claim to the contrary, this legislation does not add significant expense to the State's budget. The Governor acknowledged that he vetoed HB 83 because House lawmakers failed to pass a separate bill, the Violent Firearms Offenders Act of 2020. Such horse-trading measures wreak havoc with the lives of our citizens. [ma4jr.org/expungement-unit-rule/]

I urge you to reaffirm your commitment to make Maryland a better and safer place to live. I urge you to override those vetoes.

Sincerely,