



Maryland Alliance for Justice Reform

Dear Senator

Criminal convictions frequently carry not only a prison sentence or fine, but also result in numerous disqualifications or legal disabilities (“collateral consequences”), such as bars to professional licenses and government housing, making it difficult for a person to successfully reenter society.

Neither prosecutors, defendant lawyers, nor judges are obligated to warn of most of these collateral consequences upon a finding of guilt by trial, or prior to an admission of guilt by plea agreement. That means a person accused of a crime has no idea of the full extent of the possible punishment.

We encourage Maryland to study this issue and give special attention to the Uniform Collateral Consequences of Conviction Act which has been approved by the American Bar Association. As an aid to your study please consider “Why Your State Should Adopt the Uniform Collateral Consequences of Conviction Act” That Act is an effort to clarify a state’s collateral consequences in such a way as to make the criminal justice system both smarter and fairer to all involved.

We are confident that the results of the study will give policymakers information to make evidenced-based changes that improve a person’s chance of rebuilding their life after rehabilitation from a criminal conviction.

For more on this topic, read: “Beyond The Sentence – Understanding Collateral Consequences” <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/241927.pdf> and see <https://www.ma4jr.org/collateral-consequences/>

References:

The Uniform Act:

<https://www.uniformlaws.org/HigherLogic/System/DownloadDocumentFile.ashx?DocumentFileKey=e9fc8770-7691-c917-9451-26fdfca19277&forceDialog=0>

Why Adopt the UCCCA:

<https://www.uniformlaws.org/HigherLogic/System/DownloadDocumentFile.ashx?DocumentFileKey=faefab81-773a-f75c-0bbf-188f98d453ed&forceDialog=0>

Please support this study. Maryland needs to catch up with other States now.

Sincerely,