



Maryland Alliance for Justice Reform

Dear Senator

Next week the Judicial Proceedings Committee will be considering two important bills.

Support SB0395: Felony Murder – Children

Can people be found guilty of murder and sentenced to life in prison if the Court knows they didn't kill anyone? In Maryland, the answer is yes because of our State's legal-fiction known as the "felony-murder rule." See <https://www.ma4jr.org/felony-murder-rule/>

In Maryland, life sentences for felony-murder are still harsher as most Governors veto the huge majority of lifers' parole recommendations. Does the felony-murder rule provide a deterrent? One survey found that fewer than 1% charged with felony-murder knew of the rule before their arrest.

I urge you to support this bill which focuses on children who inadvertently became involved in a crime in the past.

Support SB0397 - Correctional Education Milestones

Why is correctional education important? The reason is simple, education reduces recidivism and changes the lives of former offenders. This bill establishes time-off-sentence incentives for the attainment of major educational milestones such as attainment of basic literacy skills, a high school diploma, career technical certifications or even AA and BA college degrees.

Today classes in prisons are no longer full and waiting lists for school have all but disappeared. What's going on? The incentives for educational participation today are no better than prison maintenance jobs. In fact, many menial jobs pay more than the stipend for educational participation. This bill will enable us to make a difference in the lives of people in our care! See: <https://www.ma4jr.org/education-credits/>

Please support this legislation. These people will be returning to my community and it is essential that they be adequately prepared.

Sincerely,