



Maryland Alliance for Justice Reform

Dear Delegate

Dear Chairman Clippinger, Vice Chairperson Atterbeary, Speaker Jones

I write to you on behalf of Maryland Alliance for Justice Reform with a request for your help to ensure committee votes on certain pending bills.

We know that the General Assembly is busy in this COVID-hampered Session with important concerns such as COVID-budgeting, police reform, and marijuana legalization. But, smaller bills that offer taxpayer savings, bipartisan support, and improvements to our criminal justice system should not be overlooked.

Particularly, we ask that you see to it that the House Judiciary Committee votes on the following bills before the 3/16/21 deadline:

HB0385 – Juvenile Felony Murder

Felony murder should be limited to “principals in the first degree” (primarily perpetrators), sentences for those convicted under the old law should be able to be modified, and Maryland needs a taskforce to study Felony Murder in general.

HB0089 – Diminution Credits for Education

In recent years, Maryland law diluted “diminution credits” by giving equal time off sentences for any “assigned tasks” (such as sweeping the floor) regardless of tasks' minimal value towards rehabilitation. This bill restores incentives for both education and employment accomplishments, both proven to reduce recidivism.

HB0102 – Inmate Earnings

Marketable job-training for all prisoners is long overdue. MCE which has been key in training unfortunately serves only about 10% of the prisoner population. Yet, nearly all returning citizens would benefit immensely from such training.

HB0131 – Restrictive housing/step down

Transition from solitary back into the institution’s general population is a process worthy of planning and careful orchestration. No one should ever be released directly from restrictive housing back into the community.

HB1187 – Juvenile Justice Reform

This bill would effectively use the Justice Reinvestment model to transform our State’s juvenile justice system, to reduce its overuse of confinement, and to make better use of restorative techniques.

Thank you for your help to keep our criminal justice system functioning fairly and efficiently for all Marylanders, despite these difficult times.

Sincerely,