

MARYLAND ALLIANCE FOR JUSTICE REFORM

Working to end unnecessary incarceration and build strong, safe communities



MAJR General Meeting
via Zoom, November 15, 7:00pm

Register for this meeting: [Click here.](#)

- (After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.)

2022 Legislative Initiatives

Veto override - Special Session -Beginning 12/6/21:

Removing the Governor from the parole process for inmates with life sentences with the possibility of parole. <https://www.ma4jr.org/parole-incentive-for-life/>

Front Door:

Juvenile Justice Reform: The Juvenile Justice Reform Council, with the assistance of the Vera Institute of Justice, has researched best practices regarding the treatment of juveniles who are subject to the criminal and juvenile justice systems. MAJR supports those recommendations. In addition MAJR supports the Juvenile Interrogation Protection Act identifying practices that have been shown to pressure children into false confessions. [HB1187](#), [SB136](#)

Felony Murder Rule: Under the legal doctrine of felony murder, if someone dies as a result of a felony, anyone who participated in that felony is ruled as

guilty as a killer—even if they themselves didn’t kill, didn’t foresee the killing, and never meant to kill anyone. In Maryland, felony murder is treated the same as a premeditated first degree murder in sentencing. See:

<https://www.ma4jr.org/felony-murder-rule/>

HB1338, HB1308/SB0919, SB0951

Marijuana legalization: When Prohibition of alcohol was repealed in 1933, crime dropped, law enforcement costs dropped, safe regulation was possible, and substantial tax revenues became available for the public good. Legalization of marijuana will bring the same opportunities and need for precautions. On balance, MAJR strongly supports the Maryland General Assembly leaders’ proposal to reduce Maryland’s misuse of criminalization and incarceration for this public health concern, as well as to provide needed tax revenue.

<https://www.ma4jr.org/marijuana/>

Behind the Walls:

Correctional Ombuds Office: Without independent oversight, Maryland prisons face chronic problems involving prisoners’ health & mental health, education, etc. – the COVID crisis unmistakably has demonstrated the need for greater transparency. The Ombuds concept has been endorsed by Gov. Larry Hogan: Cutting through layers of bureaucratic review now required, Maryland could join several other states with an independent Ombuds to publicly report and recommend improvements as to prisoner’s needs, as well as those of prison volunteers and families. <https://www.ma4jr.org/ombuds/>

Model Prisons: In European nations, prisons are different and provide lower recidivism than U.S. prisons. Why? With evidence-based assistance from the Vera Institute, six other states have initiated fundamental change in their prisons’ cultures. If recidivism can be cut in half, improvements for Marylanders in public safety and taxpayer costs would be enormous.

<https://www.ma4jr.org/model-prison/>

Direct Release from Solitary. Joining with IAHR, MAJR supports changes to DPSCS procedures so that inmates are not released directly from solitary to their community. The proposed “Step-down program” has been designed to implement these changes. [See our testimony on the 2021 legislation.](#)

Back Door:

Re-entry Programs: Prisoner reentry is the process by which prisoners, once released, return to the community. A non-legislative initiative endorsed by DPSCS Sec. Rob Green, a state Reentry Council would bring together representatives of state prisons, local jails, nonprofit providers, and families to more promptly offer connections for returning citizens with resources in their home communities to help them succeed. <https://www.ma4jr.org/reentry-council/>

Expungement: Work with the Job Opportunities Task Force (JOTF) to support the REDEEM Act and other expanded expungement laws. See <http://www.ma4jr.org/expungement-unit-rule/>

Collateral Consequences

Removing Barriers to Employment. Backdoor plans to work with the MGA Reentry Workgroup to propose bills that remove barriers to occupational licensing, business licensing, and direct employment as well as creating incentives for businesses to become second chance employers. See <https://www.ma4jr.org/liability-2/>

MAJR is looking for volunteers.

MAJR is looking for a volunteer backup for our communications lead. You would learn to develop and maintain MAJR's website, social media platforms, databases, email campaigns, and action alerts. Gain skills in Excel, Word, Wordpress, and Mailchimp. Familiarity with Facebook, Twitter, and other platforms is a plus. Email your interest in this position to our [web manager](#).

MAJR is also looking for a volunteer to assist in communications (phone and email) with our members to promote constituent calls to legislators on pending legislation. Training will be provided. Email your interest in this position to our [communications advisor](#).

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.

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