

MARYLAND ALLIANCE FOR JUSTICE REFORM

Working to end unnecessary incarceration and build strong, safe communities



You are invited...



JRCC Advisory Stakeholders

Thurs. Oct. 8, 2015 @ 2-4pm

Dorchester Public Library - 303 Gay St.
Cambridge MD 21613

The **Justice Reinvestment Coordinating Council** has two more years to develop policies to reduce mass incarceration in Maryland. This is your opportunity to give voice to your concerns and help the Council develop strong policy recommendations. Everyone is invited to give testimony.

If your organization would like to speak at the 10/8/2015 meeting, please RSVP by 10/2/2015 to Cara Sullivan, Governor's Office of Crime Control and Prevention, at cara.sullivan@maryland.gov or 410-821-2851.



MAJR General Meeting

Thurs. Oct. 29, 2015 @ 7:30pm

Center for Automotive Careers,
Vehicles for Change, 4111 Washington Blvd.,
Halethorpe, MD 21227

The **MAJR Coordinating Council** meeting will report on its plans and request approval by the general membership present. Also, the three committees will report. There will be an update on the Maryland Justice Reinvestment Coordinating Council (JRCC) and our focus groups, with requests for volunteers for a couple of tasks.

MAJR Member Interviewed on the Radio



Barbara Thomas was interviewed in September on WCAO-AM: Heaven600, "Baltimore's Good News Station." Here is the gist of her remarks:

Let's talk about the state of justice equality in Maryland: What's the status?

Our work is just beginning. Incarceration rates in Maryland and the US are nearly 3 times the level they were in the 1980s. Maryland's recidivism rate still is too high—within 3 years after release from prison, over 40% get arrested for new offenses and sent back to prison. By comparison, some other states—Oregon & Virginia—have figured out ways to drop this repeat-offense-incarceration rate into the 20% range.

What are the major issues?

1) MD uses a money bail system in which people pay money or pay for a bail bond to ensure they show up in court for their trial dates. This discriminates against low income people, who may end up spending months in jail before any trial to prove whether they even committed a crime or not.

2) As to racial inequality, African-Americans are locked up at three times the rate of whites. Although drug crimes are a huge reason for incarceration, studies show drug use rate is about the same among white and black Americans. Some of this inequality stems from discrimination, but economic and educational disadvantages may also play a role. For example, African-Americans stuck in jail—without

Unlock the Vote!



On August 2, 1965, President Lyndon Johnson signed into law the Voting Rights Act, the landmark law that dramatically expanded and protected

the voting rights of African Americans at the federal, state, and local level. Fifty years later, nearly 40,000 Marylanders – the great majority of whom are African American – continue to be barred from voting due to past criminal records. In Maryland the majority of those disenfranchised are Baltimore residents.

Earlier this year, the General Assembly passed legislation to reinstate the vote to all former prisoners living in our communities but denied the right to vote because they are on probation or parole. This historic victory for voting rights passed by an overwhelming margin in the legislature, but Governor Larry Hogan vetoed this legislation (SB340/HB980) on May 22.

Since the veto, community groups and concerned citizens have gathered to protest the Governor's action, and are now organizing an effort to override the veto. Let your delegate and senator know your position on this important issue!



Justice Reinvestment Coordinating Council

The researchers working for the PEW Charitable Trusts have investigated data from the Department of Corrections. From their **September** presentation to the JRCC we learned:

- Incarceration is not more effective at reducing recidivism than non-custodial sanctions.
- Longer prison stays do not reduce

bail—before trial may be willing to accept a plea bargain in exchange for early release. Then, with a criminal record, it is nearly impossible to find good jobs, so their economic disadvantages are amplified.

[Read More on the MAJR website](#)

Stu Simms joins MAJR as Honorary Chairman



Secretary, Maryland Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services, 1997-2003
Secretary, Maryland Department of Juvenile

Services, 1995-1997

State's Attorney for Baltimore City, 1990-1995

Assistant United States Attorney, 1978-1982

We are proud to welcome Stu Simms as one of our distinguished honorary chairmen. He noted:

"Effective crime policy requires the government and the community to use a balanced approach to offender management that still holds offenders accountable but makes effective use of government resource capacity. That balanced approach requires dedicated government and community engagement that seeks to enhance and improve all those injured—victims, offenders and the community as a whole."

[See who is on the MAJR Coordinating Council](#)

September Stakeholder Meeting

The [Justice Reinvestment Coordinating Council](#) (JRCC), convened the first of three stakeholder meetings on September 10 at the Community College of Baltimore County. The meeting room was overflowing

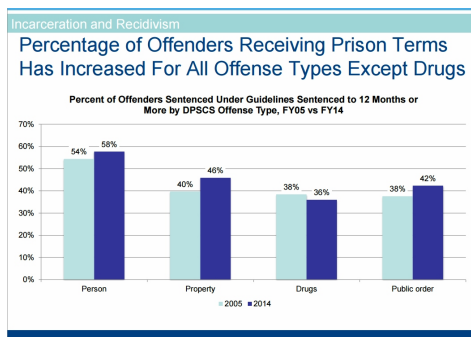
- recidivism more than shorter stays.
- In Maryland, prison and jail sentences have increased for offenders sentenced under the sentencing guidelines.
- Alternatives to incarceration are not available in all counties.
- **The percentage of offenders receiving prison terms has increased for all offense types except drugs.**



with a diverse group of over 60 people representing organizations and individuals concerned with justice reform in

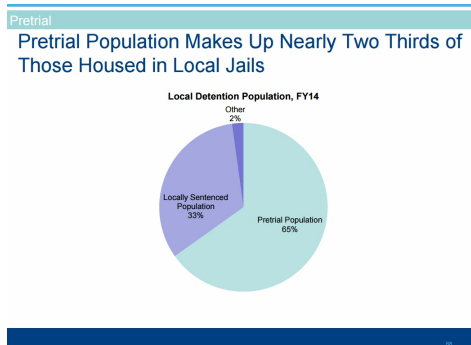
Maryland. Here are some of the key messages that came through loud and clear:

1. Prevent incarceration by funding adequate psychological and addiction treatment in communities.
2. Hold timely parole hearings.
3. Stop incarcerating people because they cannot afford fines or bail.
4. Increase the use of community conferencing and community mediation.
5. Returning citizens need access to housing and employment!
6. Provide the wraparound services many returning citizens need to succeed.
7. Support faith-based programs that mentor returning citizens.
8. End extended solitary confinement.



- Of those paroled, parolees served an average of 9 months past eligibility date, costing the system almost 1,600 beds.
- Almost three-quarters of parole and mandatory release returns to prison are for technical violations .
- Less than 40% of offenders are paroled, and of those offenders who are paroled, many are paroled after their eligibility date.
- The pretrial population makes up nearly one-quarter of the total incarcerated population.
- Median jail days before receiving a prison sentence have grown from 144 days to 163 days over the last decade.
- **The pretrial population makes up nearly two-thirds of those housed in local jails.**

See the full [factsheet](#) on the MAJR web site.



BAIL BONDS Money bail bonds illegal in Washington DC

"In the District, we release about 85% of all arrestees, a much higher percentage than all but a few court systems. About 88% of all arrestees are not again arrested prior to trial. Of those re-arrested, less than 1% are alleged to have committed a violent crime. About 88% of all arrestees return to court. Most significantly, and unique in the entire nation, the District accomplishes this without using money bonds. Money bonds that detain people are illegal in Washington, DC, as they should be everywhere."

Justice System Assessment and Intro to
Policy Development

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newsletter to your community!**

**Stay in touch with MAJR! We will
need your help for the 2016
legislative session in Annapolis!**

Visit: <http://www.ma4jr.org>

from: [We Need More Bail Reform](#) from the
Pretrial Services Agency for DC
see also: [Bailing on Baltimore](#) from the
Justice Policy Institute

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