

## Honorary Co-Chairs:



**Robert Ehrlich**

Former Governor of Maryland



**Stuart O. Simms**

Secretary, Maryland Department of Public Safety and Correctional, Retired

## 2016 Coordinating Council



**Adrian Bishop**, Stony Run Friends: Meeting Coordinator



**Diamonte Brown**, Out For Justice



**Philip Caroom**  
Former chair Maryland Judic. Conf. Ad Hoc Committee on Sentencing, Alternatives, Reentry & Best Practices



**Candy Clark**, Unitarian Universalist Legisl Priorities



**Christopher Ervin**  
Vice Chairman, The Committee Of Concerned Citizens  
President of The Lazarus Rite LLC



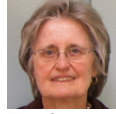
**Vince Greco**, Maryland C.U.R.E.



**Lea Green**, Director, Maryland C.U.R.E.



**Jerry Mclaurin**, People for Change



**Patience Schenck**, Educator  
Member, Annapolis Friends Peace and Justice Center

## Supporting Organizations:

[1000 Black Mentors](#)

[AFSC/Friend of a Friend](#)

[Annapolis Friends Peace and Justice Center](#)

[Asbury \(Annapolis\) United Methodist Church](#)

[Baltimore Neighborhoods, Inc](#)

[Baltimore Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends](#)

[Bethesda Friends Meeting – Peace & Social Justice Committee](#)

[Central Atlantic Conference United Church of Christ](#)

[Community Conferencing Center](#)

[Elite Human Resources](#)

[Episcopal Diocese of Maryland](#)

[Frederick Friends Meeting](#)

[Friend of a Friend Mentoring Project Gatekeepers](#)

[Greater Annapolis Interfaith Network \(GAIN\), Inc.](#) [More overleaf ...](#)

# MARYLAND ALLIANCE FOR JUSTICE REFORM

Working to end unnecessary incarceration and build strong, safe communities



Maryland Alliance for Justice Reform (MAJR) is a bi-partisan, statewide alliance seeking legislative changes to bring Maryland into the 21<sup>st</sup> century with corrections policies that are evidence-based, humane and effective. We are working together to address the problem of [mass incarceration](#) in Maryland in several ways. We invite you to join us to accomplish our goals:

- **Alternatives to incarceration**
- **Taxpayer savings**
- **Strong communities**
- **Ending inequities**
- To fully support alternatives to incarceration where appropriate;
- To save taxpayer dollars and reallocate the savings to build safer communities;
- To strengthen Maryland communities by supporting families, helping people returning from jails and prisons lead productive lives, and preventing crime;
- To end inequities in our justice system.

**Evolution of MAJR:** In 2013, the Working Group on Racism of Baltimore Yearly Meeting (the regional association of Quakers) proposed a One-Book Project, for its Meetings to hold study groups using [The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness](#) by Michelle Alexander. Many complied. Annapolis Friends invited members of St. Phillip's Episcopal Church, a mostly African American church, to join them for seven sessions of discussion.

Several sessions into the book study, there was an item in the local paper saying that the Anne Arundel delegation to the General Assembly was holding a hearing to learn what county residents hoped the 2014 session would achieve. We signed up and presented a proposal to form a task force to see how the rate of incarceration might be lowered in Maryland.

Unknown to us, word had gotten out that we were making that presentation, and a large number of people from the Committee of Concerned Citizens and Maryland C.U.R.E. came to the hearing. They made up about 75% of the audience. This was the beginning of the coalition that now includes people who have

been incarcerated, criminal justice professionals, and many others from various parts of Maryland. We lobbied hard for the task force bill, but it did not pass.

At the end of the 2014 session, we hit the ground running, deciding to bypass a task force in 2015 and just put forward seven bills that would propose what we had hoped a task force would accomplish. As the alliance grew, we adopted the name Maryland Alliance for Justice Reform (MAJR).

**In 2015 Maryland Alliance for Justice Reform (MAJR) initiatives offered to the General Assembly a toolkit to begin repair of our state's corrections system.** This bipartisan alliance, with honorary co-chairs former Governor Robert L. Ehrlich and former Chief Judge Joseph H. Murphy, conferred with Maryland citizens, experts organizations and legislators to sponsor these interrelated bills:

**1) BUDGET-SAVINGS and NEW PRIORITIES: The "Justice Reinvestment" Act**—a bipartisan plan recommended by the U.S. Dept. of Justice and adopted in 26 other states— reduces low-risk prison populations and repurposes the same funds for screening, reentry, offender employment, and other services to lower recidivism and to increase public safety.  
**PASSED:** *SB 602 (Miller-D) / HB0388 (Dumais and Vallario)- Justice Reinvestment Coordinating Council (JRCC)*  
**JRCC hearings are now underway! June/2015**

**2) DIVERSION:** "Safer Communities Conciliation Act"- This bill expands Maryland's successful juvenile mediation and

"restorative justice" programs to adults. When offenders successfully complete agreements to satisfy victims (e.g., restitution), counseling, no new problems), charges are not filed or are dismissed, so no criminal record impedes employment. *SB 388 (Hough-R) / HB 791 (McComas) - Expungement - Restorative Justice Programs*  
**REFERRED TO JRCC**

**3) EMPLOYMENT-RELATED MEASURES:** Regular employment reduces recidivism by 50%, so MAJR also supports:  
**A) The Maryland Second Chance Act of 2015** - Championed by the Job Opportunities Task Force (JOTF), this bill would allow certain nonviolent misdemeanor convictions to be shielded from public view after a 3-7 year waiting period, balancing the public's need to know with ex-offenders' employment needs. *HB0244(Anderson-D)/SB 526 (Raskin-D) - Maryland Second Chance Act of 2015*  
**PASSED**

**B) "Ex-Offenders' Earned Opportunities for Employment Act"**-Based on the Uniform Laws Commission (ULC) model, this bill identifies "collateral consequences" in our state law due to criminal records, then permits our sentencing courts and Parole Commission to order part or full restoration of employment rights, licenses, etc., if no unreasonable risk is found to public safety or others' welfare. It also creates a website to notify offenders of "collateral consequences" of conviction as part of a guilty plea and sentencing process; and provides ex-offenders may earn expungement, shielded records, and "certificates of rehabilitation" for confirmed lawful behavior after 5 years for certain categories of offenses.  
**BILL DIED IN COMMITTEE**

*SB 686 (Benson-D) / HB 1059 (Barnes) - Earned Opportunities – Collateral Consequences*

**4) MORE EFFECTIVE PAROLE:** "Parole Incentive for Life"- Developed by Maryland Restorative Justice Initiative (RJI), this bill provides that final decisions concerning offenders with life sentences with possibility of parole will be made by Governor's appointed Parole Commissioners, rather than requiring Governor's continuous intervention and approval. Individual parole decisions apply evidence-based principles, include a victim's input and evaluate an offender's record. *This system, used in 47 other U.S. states, also insulates a governor from possible "Willie Horton" anxiety and increases inmates' incentive for good behavior.* Offenders sentenced to life without possibility of parole remain unaffected. Release of elderly and medically challenged inmates can provide huge savings to the state corrections budget.  
*HB0303 (Carter)/ SB0111(McFadden-D)- Inmates - Life Imprisonment - Parole Reform*  
**BILL DIED IN COMMITTEE**

We should note, not all of these bills passed. However, The Justice Reinvestment Act did, and the Justice Reinvestment Coordinating Council is now holding hearings about the condition of our prisons. Please check [www.MA4JR.org](http://www.MA4JR.org) for hearing sites, times and topics.

**We are now preparing our 2016 agenda. To take part, please come to our General Meetings or sign up for a focus group.**

## More Supporting Organizations:

[The Lazarus Rite, LLC](#)  
[Interfaith Action for Human Rights](#)  
[Maryland Chapter National Association of Social Workers](#)  
[Maryland Correctional Administrators Association](#)  
[Maryland C.U.R.E.](#)  
[Maryland Restorative Justice Initiative](#)  
[Mothers of Murdered Sons & Daughters](#)  
[National Association of Social Workers – Maryland Chapter](#)  
[Out For Justice](#)  
[Patapsco Friends Meeting](#)  
[People for Change Coalition](#)  
[Resiliency Arts LLC](#)  
[Stony Run Friends Meeting](#)  
[Super Solution: A Different Approach Program](#)  
[Unitarian Universalist Church of Annapolis](#)  
[Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of MD](#)

## Put Your Organization Here

For more information on the Maryland Alliance for Justice Reform, including complete drafts of our 2016 bills, please go to the our website at [www.ma4jr.org](http://www.ma4jr.org) or call the MAJR number (443) 583-4251 at the Annapolis Friends Peace and Justice Center, 351 Dubois Road, Annapolis, MD 21401.

[www.ma4jr.org](http://www.ma4jr.org)

9/28/2015