

MARYLAND YOUTH JUSTICE COALITION

December 2024 Newsletter



Welcome to the December MYJC newsletter! Each month we assemble all the latest need-to-know news about MYJC and what's happening for youth across Maryland. Please share your community events, local news, needs, and actions with us by emailing gail@advancemaryland.org.

Share this newsletter with your network and encourage them to sign up to receive their own copy [here](#).

Did you miss our previous newsletters? Find it and all of our newsletters [here](#).

HIGHLIGHTS

The Commission on Juvenile Justice Reform & Emerging & Best Practices, created by HB 814 from last session has started to hold meetings. These meetings are open to the public, and MYJC encourages people to attend. The commission is expected to hold subcommittee meetings, which should be open to the public as well. Meeting agendas, minutes, future meeting dates, and other info can be found at the commission's website [here](#).

The next meeting of the Commission will be **December 11, at 4pm** at 100 Community Place, Crownsville, MD.

RECAP

In November, Human Rights for Kids released a report titled [“Disposable Children: The Prevalence of Child Abuse and Trauma Among Children Prosecuted as Adults in Maryland.”](#) It is considered one of HRFK's most important publications to-date, as it is the first report in the country to examine the rates of ACEs/trauma among children tried

as adults. [WYPR](#) and [Maryland Matters](#) have written articles discussing the report and its findings. The report is essential to changing the narrative and conversation in Maryland around system-involved kids.

According to the report, Maryland is among the worst states in the nation when it comes to the number of people incarcerated for crimes they committed, at 6% of its overall prison population, and over 90% of them are people of color. The report also uncovered shocking rates of childhood trauma and abuse among this population. “Maryland is faced with a simple choice. On the one hand the state can look the other way, continuing to incarcerate children who act out behaviorally due to abuse, neglect, and community violence, or it can seek to address the root of the problem by showing these children something many of them have never had before—love.” In the final analysis, children tried as adults in Maryland are most often victims of physical, emotional, and sexual abuse, as well as neglect. They come from communities that are overrun with violence while there is little safety for them. They were victims long before they were offenders, and it is absolutely necessary for us to bring light to this reality. You can read the full report [here](#).



Photo: Panel discussion at HRFK's report release event. The panelists, from L-R, are Delegate Sandy Bartlett, Casi O'Neill (OPD), Kimber Watts (OPD), Gordon Pack (Prepare Parole), and Nate Balis (AECF).

AHEAD

Announcing the launch of the Youth Rights and Safety Hub! If you are interested in short term and long term narrative change about youth justice, or if your organization needs communications support for your work with or supporting youth, please join the hub. [Learn more here](#) and please share with your network.

We're still accepting donations for the Office of the Public Defender (OPD)'s youth supply closet! ICYMI, Advance Maryland is leading a donation drive to support system-involved youth in need of supplies like those entering group homes. Check out the Amazon [wishlist here](#), and choose to ship directly to OPD's offices.

IN THE NEWS

Some Baltimore residents are opposed to the renovation of a youth treatment center. The DJS Maryland Youth Residence Center houses programs for troubled youth as an alternative to detention programs. The state's proposal to renovate the building and expand it into a high-security, 24-bed residential treatment center for young men makes some residents concerned about safety, while some others feel that the project does not align with the efforts to improve the community. "Isolation from the community negatively impacts committed youth," says Schiraldi earlier this year, "Serving youth closer to their homes and communities increases opportunities for families, caregivers, mentors, and relatives to actively participate in treatment and play a critical role in meeting short- and long-term rehabilitative goals." Read the full [Baltimore Banner article here](#).

It's legal for police to use deception in interrogations. Advocates want that to end. When it comes to children and teenagers, a growing number of states are stopping that practice: Ten have passed laws in recent years effectively banning police from lying to juveniles during interrogations, starting with Illinois in 2021. But some legal advocates are pushing for a deception ban that would apply to everyone, not just kids. [More details in this NPR article](#).

A new juvenile crime tracking system aims to improve case monitoring, according to the BPD. The Baltimore City Police Department is making a commitment to improving the tracking of juveniles in Baltimore City who have been released from police custody. Reynolds also shares that the dashboard will help track victims and schools where juveniles come from. A Youth Dashboard will be developed, providing a centralized view of youth cases. [Click here for more details in this WBAL article.](#)

Have an upcoming event you want us to highlight in the January newsletter?

Email gail@advancemaryland.org.

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