

MARYLAND YOUTH JUSTICE COALITION

July 2026 Newsletter



Welcome to the July 2026 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. Feel free also to forward this newsletter with your network and encourage them to sign up to receive their own copy [here](#).

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

Not yet a member of MYJC? Email gail@advancemaryland.org today to join.

HIGHLIGHTS

We held our annual MYJC Retreat on July 8. We reflected on our 2026 achievements and built a shared vision through 2030. What was clear from our retreat was that **Maryland can build a future where young people are supported, not criminalized — but only if we choose to invest in them.** The next four years present a chance to not just end the practice of automatically charging children as adults, but also move past the school-to-prison pipeline mindset, and shift public funding priorities from arrest, prosecution, and incarceration toward prevention, mentorship, mental health, and community-based alternatives. This isn't a soft-on-crime vision; it's a recognition that locking young people up costs more, hurts more, and produces less safety than investing in their futures. Thank you to everyone who attended!



Photo: Members gathered for MYJC's 2026 Annual Retreat

AHEAD

Join our biweekly meetings! Moving forward, we will be implementing more in-depth organization introductions so that members can get a sense of the various groups that make up our coalition. If you do not yet have a calendar invite to our meetings but would like to attend, please reach out to alice@advancemaryland.org.

Steering committee applications are still open! Steering committee members are expected to attend biweekly full coalition meetings, weekly steering committee meetings, at least one workgroup meeting, assist in the weekly tasks of the coalition, and be available for rapid response to urgent matters. Members of the steering committee must be official organizational members of MYJC, meaning your organization has signed off on the mission and bylaws governing the coalition.

Interested? [Fill out this form by July 31.](#)

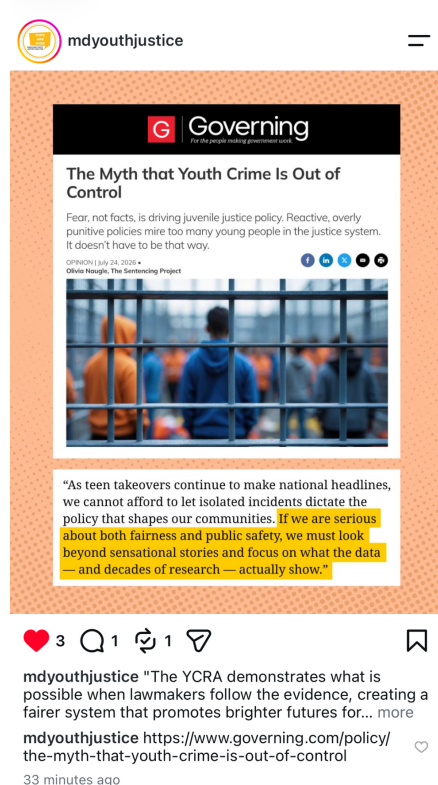
Youth Charging Reform Act needs our continued support! MYJC has already begun proactive defense of the YCRA. We know there has already been some misleading information about the YCRA in recent media, and we expect much more, especially after October 1st. We invite everyone to participate in public education efforts, including print/tv media outreach and social media. MYJC has a rapid response workgroup for those who are able to participate in ongoing and rapid communications

work - email alice@advancemaryland.org to join. We also invite all of our partners to amplify our social media posts.



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IN THE NEWS

The Myth that Youth Crime Is Out of Control. Fear, not facts, is driving juvenile justice policy. Reactive, overly punitive policies mire too many young people in the justice system. It doesn't have to be that way. [Check out this empowering must-read from Olivia Naugle of The Sentencing Project in Governing.](#) (July 24, 2026)

States split on whether youth justice should prioritize punishment or rehabilitation. Maryland among the states rewriting youth penalties to lessen restrictions, as some other states head in the opposite direction. [Check out this Maryland Matters article](#) for more. (July 19, 2026)

Baltimore residents call for youth diversion, disability support to sustain crime drop. Baltimore residents said that the city's next violence prevention strategy should focus less on punishment and more on removing the barriers that can pull people toward violence in the first place. [Get the scoop from the Baltimore Sun here.](#) (July 14, 2026)

Betsy Fox Tolentino outlines changes to Maryland's youth justice system. Maryland Department of Juvenile Services Secretary Betsy Fox Tolentino joined C4 and Bruce Elliott for an in-depth conversation about the future of youth justice in Maryland and growing concerns and criticism. [Listen to the WBAL Radio conversation here.](#) (July 8, 2026)

Del. Scott Phillips talks Baltimore crime and youth justice reforms discussed. Del. Scott Phillips speaks with TJ Smith about crime and public safety priorities impacting Baltimore, including youth justice reforms passed during the 2026 legislative session. The discussion focuses on how recent policy changes may shape youth accountability and public safety efforts across the city. [Listen to the discussion from WBAL Radio here.](#) (June 22, 2026)

UPCOMING EVENTS

What They Don't See — Youth Incarceration: Stories of Resilience, Resistance, and Restoration

Thursday & Friday, July 30 & 31, 6:30PM
UMB Community Engagement Center
16 S Poppleton St, Baltimore
Free, [RSVP here](#)

Join WombWorks for an original production created and performed by their Summer Teen Ensemble. Through personal stories, original writing, and performance, young artists explore the realities of the juvenile justice system, the school-to-prison pipeline, and the impact these systems have on youth, families, and communities. The event is free to join, just [RSVP here.](#)

Save the date for an exclusive film screening on September 3 in Downtown Silver Spring.
More details on the way!

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

Email gail@advancemaryland.org.

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