

# MARYLAND YOUTH JUSTICE COALITION

## April 2026 Newsletter

KIDS  
ARE  
KIDS

MARYLAND YOUTH  
JUSTICE COALITION

Welcome to the April 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](mailto: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](mailto:gail@advancemaryland.org) today to join.

## HIGHLIGHTS

**It's official: The Youth Charging Reform Act (YCRA) passed, and it's on its way to being signed into law by the governor!** 🎉 After over a dozen years, and the work of hundreds of advocates and thousands of Marylanders who are continuing the work, we have made a major first step in ending the automatic charging of kids as adults in Maryland. We give a huge THANK YOU to our partners (including you!) for the many years of hard work that led to the Youth Charging Reform Act. ❤️

**Bill Signing Save the Date:** The YCRA could be signed on May 12th or May 26th.

**MYJC Resource:** [Summary of the Youth Charging Reform Act](#)

## RECAP

**Now that session is over, you can track what youth justice and MYJC priority bills passed and what didn't.** Check out our final [updated bill tracker](#) for the 2026 legislative session.

# AHEAD

The work continues. **Our next meeting will be on Monday, May 11th at 4PM** where we will discuss what our work should be post-session to defend and build on the YCRA. We will also discuss next steps to identify what our coalition prioritizes over the next few years beyond this effort. With the passage of the YCRA, we have an opportunity to focus on new efforts that protect kids who become system-involved, keep kids out of the system, and just as importantly, support community efforts to empower our youth.

One of these crucial next steps will be **our annual coalition retreat**, which will be held in mid-June of this year. We are looking for volunteers to help us plan the retreat, please email [sergio@advancemaryland.org](mailto:sergio@advancemaryland.org) if you are interested. Expect a survey and date to be discussed at our May meeting.

# IN THE NEWS

## Session/Bill Updates

**The Youth Charging Reform Act headed to Gov. Moore:** Coverage from [Maryland Matters](#), [Baltimore Banner](#), [Baltimore Sun/The Sentinel](#), [CBS Baltimore](#), [Washington Times](#).

**After more than a decade, youth charging bill passes, heads to governor's desk.** Sen. William C. Smith Jr., the bill's sponsor, called passage in both chambers "a significant step forward," even as advocates and some Democratic legislators were saying it's only a first step and will need to be strengthened in the future to help more youth. [Check out this Maryland Matters article.](#) (April 7, 2026)

**Despite reservations on both sides, advocates hope to pass youth charging bill.**

Supporters are pushing for approval, saying the compromise bill is better than nothing. [Read on in Maryland Matters.](#) (April 6, 2026)

**House Judiciary Committee passes the Youth Charging Reform Act:** Coverage from [Maryland Matters](#), [WYPR](#), [Baltimore Sun](#).

## **House panel pressed to accept Senate bill to cut number of youth charged as adults.**

With one eye fixed on the calendar, supporters of a bill that would make it harder to charge juveniles as adults pressed a House committee to accept a clean Senate version of the bill to improve its chances of passage in the remaining days of the session. [More from Maryland Matters.](#) (April 1, 2026)

## **General News**

**Where Maryland made progress on criminal justice.** As Maryland's 2026 legislative session closed last week, much attention was focused on redistricting battles that drew national scrutiny. Far less notice was paid to a quieter but no less important story: Lawmakers took meaningful steps to expand second chances in both the youth and adult justice systems and strengthen civic participation for justice-impacted Marylanders. [Read more from the Baltimore Sun.](#) (April 27, 2026)

**Envy program revival gains support from Hagerstown.** City officials are weighing reviving the Envy youth initiative as a state-backed public safety program wraps up its two-year pilot, offering a potential framework to reduce youth crime and strengthen community support systems. The state initiative was a collaboration among the Maryland Department of Human Services, the Department of Juvenile Services, and the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services, created to better coordinate services for families involved in multiple systems. [Read more from Local News 1.](#) (April 17, 2026)

**Silver Oak shutdown calls grow as whistleblower and lawmakers claim violence, med failures.** Mounting calls to close Silver Oak Academy are intensifying after lawmakers, a former medical contractor, and an internal document obtained by Spotlight on Maryland describe the residential facility for foster youth as possibly spiralling into a crisis. Silver Oak's controversy centers on the privately run residential program in Western Carroll County, operated by Rites of Passage under state oversight. The facility serves teenage boys, including those involved in Maryland's foster care and juvenile justice systems. [More from WJLA.](#) (April 17, 2026).

## **The horrifying secret of the child detention center we shared as detainee and warden.**

"We come to this story from opposite sides of the detention walls: One of us oversaw the incarceration of youth at the Cheltenham Youth Detention Center, and the other was incarcerated there as a child in the 1990s." [Check out this piece on MSN.](#) (March 31, 2026)



**UPCOMING EVENTS**

## "It Takes a Village" Storytime Event

Saturday, May 2, 11AM–1PM

James A. Newpher Library – CCBC Essex Campus  
7201 Rossville Blvd, Baltimore MD

Join the Criminal Justice Studies and Library Services departments of the Community College of Baltimore County (CCBC) for their second annual It Takes a Village storytime event! CCBC students will be reading to youth of all ages as part of a service-learning experience. Helpful resources for parents and fun activities for all will be provided. Every child will have the opportunity to take home a book to continue their reading journey and stay connected with their local libraries.

## IT TAKES A VILLAGE STORYTIME EVENT



COMMUNITY COLLEGE OF BALTIMORE COUNTY PRESENTS THE  
SECOND ANNUAL *IT TAKES A VILLAGE* STORYTIME EVENT FOR KIDS OF ALL AGES

- CCBC student volunteers will read to children, and families can also read together.
- Information to support reading at home with children will be available for parents.
- Fun stations with games, giveaways, children's crafts, and family entertainment for all.

**Location:**

James A. Newpher Library - CCBC Essex Campus  
Community College of Baltimore County  
7201 Rossville Boulevard, Baltimore, MD 21237

**Date:** Saturday May 2, 2026 **Time:** 11 a.m.-1 p.m. **Cost:** Free

**Contact:**

Tressie Nickelberry at [tnickelberry@ccbcmd.edu](mailto:tnickelberry@ccbcmd.edu) (or)

Erika Harris at [eharris@ccbcmd.edu](mailto:eharris@ccbcmd.edu)

*For safety reasons, parents and caregivers must remain with children during the event. No drop-offs are permitted. Thank you for understanding.*

Scan or click  
QR code  
to RSVP.



## COMMUNITY MURAL



# FUNDRAISER

supporting immigrant youth

An evening of **art, food, and community** to support an immigrant youth-led mural in Baltimore

## MAY 8

anytime between  
4-8PM

**UNITY HALL**  
1505 EUTAW PL BALTIMORE

### FEATURING

- Silent auction & original artwork for sale
- Food prepared by AWE clients
- Beer & wine
- Reflections from youth artists
- Youth artwork for sale

Join us to support a group of immigrant youth who are creating a community mural in Southeast Baltimore - "We Are Here: Our Colors, Our Stories, Our Community."

At a time when immigrant communities are under attack, the mural celebrates the voices, resilience, and creativity of immigrant youth - and reminds us that joy and community are forms of resistance.

### WANT TO GET INVOLVED?

**Donate art or an art experience!**  
We're looking for art or art experiences to sell at the event. Reach out to us at [info@easylewomen.org](mailto:info@easylewomen.org) for more details.

**Sponsor the mural**  
Donate through QR code or contact us for more information.



HEAL  
HEALTHY EQUITY AND LEADERSHIP

Questions? Contact us at [info@easylewomen.org](mailto:info@easylewomen.org)

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

Email [gail@advancemaryland.org](mailto:gail@advancemaryland.org).

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**Paid for by the Advance Maryland Education Fund**

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