

MARYLAND YOUTH JUSTICE COALITION

June 2025 Newsletter



Welcome to the June 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](#).

FEATURED

The Maryland Department of Juvenile Services Secretary [Vincent Schiraldi resigned from his position](#) earlier this month. Governor Moore's office announced that they had chosen Betsy Fox Tolentino to replace Schiraldi as head of the state agency responsible for helping youth involved in the legal system. Read MYJC's official statement below.

"The Maryland Youth Justice Coalition (MYJC) expresses its disappointment regarding the resignation of Vincent Schiraldi as Secretary of the Department of Juvenile Services (DJS). Secretary Schiraldi brought essential subject-matter expertise and responsible oversight to an agency that had suffered from neglect and deterioration under the previous administration. His vision for reforming DJS was steering the agency towards a brighter future, emphasizing the importance of rehabilitative programs and services that promote both public safety and positive outcomes for youth in need.

It is unfortunate that personal and political attacks on Secretary Schiraldi have overshadowed the significant changes and innovative programs launched under his leadership. We firmly believe that the path to safer communities and improved outcomes for youth lies in support, healing, and guidance, rather than in punitive measures.

MYJC welcomes the appointment of Betsy Tolentino as interim Secretary. We are hopeful that her leadership will continue to drive necessary reforms, ensuring that youth receive appropriate programming and services in their communities and treatment settings. It is imperative that best practices are upheld and that she receives the support of state leaders throughout her tenure."

RECAP

May Recap

On May 20, **members of MYJC turned out for the Baltimore City State's Attorney Ivan Bates' youth justice town hall.** The message we heard from our community members was clear, people want more services for youth before they are in crisis, everyone needs more connection and responsibility for ensuring our youth succeed, and investing in our communities and families is the best solution.



Photo: MYJC members gather outside Ivan Bates' youth justice town hall holding signs that say "Care Not Cages" and "End Autocharging Now."

June Recap

MYJC also held our annual retreat on June 9 to reflect on our progress, connect as a team, and plan ahead. We assessed the coalition's performance, had a Q&A with a DJS representative, and drafted a plan for legislative work next session. ICYMI, you can view the retreat presentation and notes [here](#). Thank you to everyone who attended!

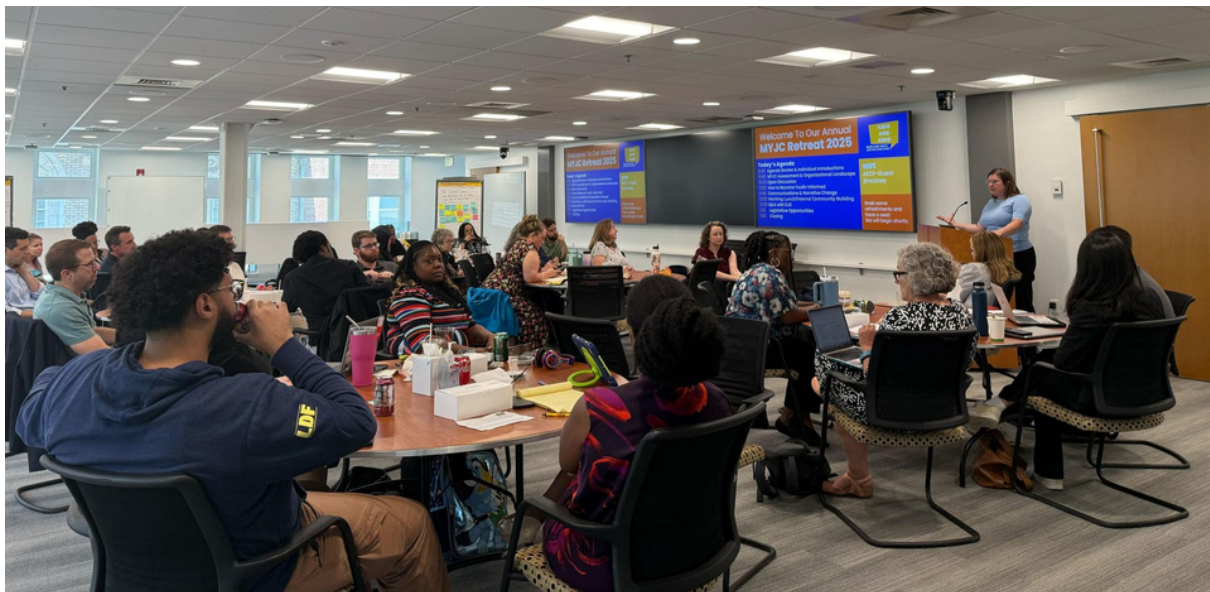


Photo: Attendees at the 2025 MYJC Annual Retreat

AHEAD

In July, we're focusing on workgroups and learning more about prevention services and DJS operations.

Please sign up for at least one MYJC workgroup by emailing alice@advancemaryland.org. We need volunteers for the automatic charging workgroup, the non legal system workgroup (mental health, education, jobs, etc), and the youth informed/engagement workgroup.

July 7th meeting - Focus on Youth Service Bureaus and how federal DOJ cuts impact Maryland

July 21 meeting - Meet DJS Secretary Betsy Fox-Tolentino and learn about her vision for DJS and how she wants to work with advocates. Submit anonymous questions in advance by using [this form](#).

IN THE NEWS

Maryland fails to protect young inmates in adult jails. Maryland law requires minors as young as 14 to be charged as adults for certain crimes, often placing them in adult jails. This practice has led to traumatic experiences for youth and numerous violations of federal law, including rules that limit minors' time in adult facilities and require separation from adult inmates. Maryland exceeded the federal violation threshold by seven times, risking a loss of \$350,000 in funding. Despite this, lawmakers have not passed reforms to bring the state into compliance. Youth advocates report that minors held in adult jails face threats, coercion, and extreme fear with some avoiding basic hygiene due to fear of assault. Featured on NPR via WYPR, listen [here](#).

Mayor Scott highlights youth programs, calls for expansion amid crime dip. Baltimore Mayor Brandon Scott reported a citywide drop in crime, including reductions in auto thefts, robberies, arson, and carjackings, crediting the city's violence prevention strategies. He emphasized that a small group of repeat juvenile offenders is driving much of the youth crime, and while the juvenile justice system isn't broken, it needs modernization. Scott urged expansion of targeted programs like GVRs to better support at-risk youth. WBAL Radio article [here](#).

Weekend juvenile crime spree; carjackings, robberies and bulletproof vest. Baltimore experienced a surge in juvenile crime over the weekend, with multiple carjackings, robberies, and police chases involving teenagers. Incidents included a man being threatened at gunpoint, a 15-year-old robbed, and several stolen vehicles recovered. Police arrested multiple juveniles, including a 16-year-old previously charged with carjacking who was out on an ankle monitor. In another case, a teen suspect wore body armor and was found with drugs. Residents voiced frustration over the repeated offenses and lack of effective intervention. Read the WBFF article [here](#).

Justice for Maryland's youth still has a ways to go. River Hill High School student and Student Justice Alliance founder and president Alvin Lee writes in [this Baltimore Sun op-ed](#) that the movement for youth justice reform is increasingly necessary.

Real public safety solutions are powered by the community. The historic decline in gun violence in Baltimore represents the direct result of strategic community-based interventions, according to OPD's Natasha Dartigue in [this Baltimore Sun op-ed](#).

Vincent Schiraldi says he left DJJ due to 'human rights abuses' in youth justice system. The "main reason," Schiraldi describes leaving DJJ is he no longer wanted to be associated with Maryland's habit of incarcerating young people in adult corrections facilities. Read all about it in [this Baltimore Sun article](#), as well as through [Schiraldi's guest commentary](#).

Facing pressure, Maryland's youth justice services agency gets leader with deep roots, high stakes. Hard conversations will come, but new DJS secretary Betsy Fox-Tolentino said she'll listen to law enforcement partners and community members in [this Baltimore Banner article](#).

UPCOMING EVENTS

The only upcoming events we've heard of are our MYJC meetings! Email alice@advancemaryland.org if you need the calendar invite / Zoom information.

Workgroup meetings: Please sign up for at least one MYJC workgroup by emailing alice@advancemaryland.org. We need volunteers for the automatic charging workgroup, the non legal system workgroup (mental health, education, jobs, etc), and the youth informed/engagement workgroup.

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Have an upcoming event you want us to highlight in the July newsletter?
Email gail@advancemaryland.org.

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