

MARYLAND YOUTH JUSTICE COALITION

January 2025 Newsletter



Happy new year, and welcome to the January 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 2025 Maryland General Assembly session has officially begun! There are a number of youth justice bills that have been introduced already, and we anticipate many more, including legislation to limit or end automatic charging of kids as adults. MYJC will be tracking bills so you know what's being introduced, when hearings are happening, and what bills MYJC or our partners are taking positions on so you can decide what to support, and what to oppose. The 2025 MYJC bill tracker can be [found here](#) and will remain up to date throughout session.

MYJC Priority: Ending the Practice of Charging Kids as Adults

- MYJC will primarily focus on legislation that will end “automatic charging” of kids as adults this session. Senator Smith and Delegate Toles are introducing a bill that *limits* automatic charging, but does not end autocharging for all cases. The Senate bill, SB422 can be found [here](#).
- **Delegate Ruff has announced he will reintroduce the YES Act**, as previously sponsored by Senator Carter (who is no longer in office), which ends automatic charging for all cases. We will share more information after the bill is introduced.

There are a number of bills MYJC and partners will be opposing. Follow along in the [bill tracker](#).

RECAP

The Citizens Policing Project held a holiday giveaway on December 7 at the Triangle Faith Community's annual Hot Lunch and Hats Event. Items ranged from free winter gear to groceries and other essentials. MYJC assembled donation bags for CPP at our YJAM event in October.



Photos from CPP's holiday giveaway.

AHEAD

The next eight weeks will be the busiest time for hearings, testimony, and voting. To ensure the latest news and key developments, be sure to check the bill tracker regularly. Whether you're following a specific bill or just want to keep up with legislative activity, the tracker will provide you with weekly updates on everything happening during session.

If you want to be even more involved in legislative advocacy, join the legislative workgroup! ***New time*** Next meeting is January 31st at 3p. To join, email alice@advancemaryland.org.

Open call for individuals and organizations who want to shape the narrative around young people in Maryland. The Youth Rights and Safety Hub launched this month and is an opportunity for state and local organizations who are interested in influencing the narrative about Maryland's youth. The hub is a collaborative space that will provide members with communications resources and training while we work to change and shape the public narrative. [Learn more here.](#) To join, email yrsh@advancemaryland.org.

IN THE NEWS

The number of teens killed by gun violence while under the state's supervision dropped by half in 2024, according to a new report from the Maryland Department of Juvenile Services, even as the number of youths under the agency's watch increased. Baltimore State's Attorney Ivan Bates said he was pleased to see the decline but said no youth under juvenile services supervision should be accused of gun violence: "If that number is not zero, it indicates a problem that must be addressed." Get the [full Baltimore Banner article here.](#)

While the month of November topped the 2024 year in terms of juvenile arrests for Baltimore, a spokesperson for the Baltimore City Police Department said none of the arrests were affected by the new state law that allowed police more power to arrest youths. None of the reported crimes for the month of November involved children between the ages of 10 and 12, except for two 12-year-olds that were arrested for carjacking. The offense is considered a "crime of violence," meaning that they could have been prosecuted even without the change in law. Read the [Baltimore Sun article here.](#)

The Office of the Public Defender held a rally and press conference advocating for their session priorities which include ending automatic charging and increased funding. "According to the public defender's office, Maryland ranked second behind Alabama in automatically sending teenagers aged 14 to 17 to adult court. The office notes that in 2022, about 12% of teenagers tried as adults were convicted." Read the [Maryland Matters article here.](#)

UPCOMING EVENTS



The Racial/Ethnic Disparities Committee presents a special screening of *Stamped From the Beginning*. The film screening will be followed by a youth-led panel discussion, and the event includes catered food, exciting prizes, and much more. Youth are especially encouraged to attend and actively participate in the conversation. The event is free.

January 25, 12:00pm–4:00pm
[8045 Harriet Tubman Ln, Columbia MD](https://www.google.com/maps/place/8045+Harriet+Tubman+Ln,+Columbia,+MD)

January 31, 2025 at 3pm - MYJC Legislative Workgroup

February 3, 2025 at 4pm - MYJC Full Coalition Meeting

February 17, 2025 - MYJC Joins the Day of Action: Justice for Children, Immigrants, and Incarcerated Marylanders lobby night. 3-6pm. St. Anne's Parish [199 Duke of Gloucester St. Annapolis, MD](https://www.google.com/maps/place/199+Duke+of+Gloucester+St,+Annapolis,+MD). Stay tuned for more information.

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

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