

MARYLAND YOUTH JUSTICE COALITION

November/December 2025 Newsletter

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MARYLAND YOUTH
JUSTICE COALITION

Welcome to the November/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. Feel free also to forward this newsletter to 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](#).

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

HIGHLIGHTS

Our action alert is live! [Click here to send a letter to your legislators](#), calling on them **to end the automatic charging of children as adults during the 2026 legislative session**. Share the alert with your networks!

Are you a student interested in social justice, law, or criminal justice? Join the Student Justice Alliance in advocating for fair, transparent, representative, and diverse judiciaries! The Student Justice Alliance is introducing a bill in the upcoming 2026 legislative session for court reform. As a youth coalition member and community director, you'll have the opportunity to meet leading lawyers, judges, and legislators as we engage in lobbying, events, and testimonies.

[Click here](#) to sign up, and contact alvin@studentjusticealliance.org with any questions.

**WE'RE
LAUNCHING**
a youth coalition

FOR FAIRER COURTS

- meet prominent lawyers and judges
- learn best practices for advocacy
- make your mark on the justice system

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RECAP

On December 8, MYJC members gathered across the street from the Youth Detention Facility in Baltimore for an emergency press conference, calling on local leaders to improve conditions and end unnecessary incarceration ASAP after it was revealed that the youth detained were left without heating during the cold winter months. ICYMI, watch the livestream on [our Facebook page](#).



Photo: A crowd stands around with "Care Not Cages" signs as Delegate Caylin Young speaks at MYJC's emergency press conference.

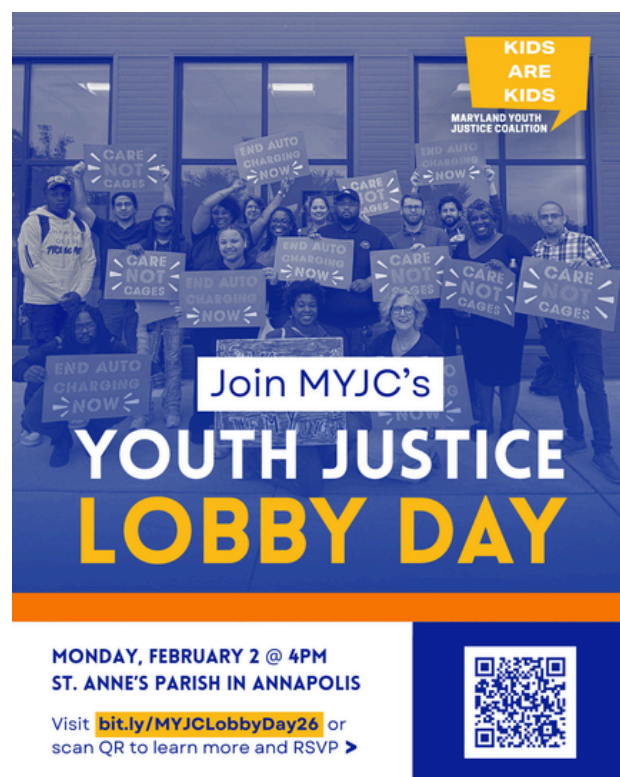
MYJC members voted to approve priorities for the legislative session. For details, review the recommendations below:

- **Autocharging Workgroup:** Presentation [here](#)
- **Prevention Workgroup:** Presentation [here](#)

AHEAD

Session is just around the corner! We're working hard to carry our momentum into January, advocating for policies that advance real justice and safety for young people across the state. Let's make 2026 the year we finally make progress on ending automatic charging!

Want to get involved? Join us on February 2nd for Youth Justice Lobby Day! We are lifting up youth voices in Annapolis and bringing constituents from across the state to advocate for ending the traumatic and racist practice of charging children as adults. We want our legislators to hear directly from you about what your schools, communities, and local youth need! [Click here to RSVP.](#)



Stay connected with us throughout the legislative session by following us on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), and [Bluesky](#), and keep an eye out for our monthly newsletters for the latest updates and action opportunities.

IN THE NEWS

Locked-up children left 'extremely cold' at Baltimore facility, public defenders say. The attorneys also said the incarcerated children are "spending almost all hours of the day in cramped cells deprived of school and physical activity" and that facility leadership has indicated that they anticipate receiving parts needed to fix the heating system early next week. The conditions have already "been going on for over a week," they said. "This is unconscionable," Public Defender Natasha Dartigue said in her office's statement. "Baltimore City Public Schools closes when indoor temperatures are this low because we recognize that children cannot learn, cannot thrive, cannot be safe in those conditions." [Read more](#) from the Baltimore Banner.

Acting Maryland DJS secretary highlights efforts taken to drop juvenile crime numbers. Betsy Fox Tolentino, the acting secretary of Maryland's Department of Juvenile Services (DJS), says juvenile crime is down despite residents saying they still feel unsafe and more needs to be done to address the violence. "We're seeing that when we hold people accountable, and we have the right level of community support, we can really see a drop

in violent crime," Fox Tolentino said. Check out [this CBS News article](#) for more details.

Recent report sheds light on incarcerated who committed crimes as kids. A recent report by Human Rights For Kids (HRFK) offers insight into the lives of incarcerated individuals who committed crimes as children. Researchers administered surveys to more than 2,200 incarcerated individuals in more than 38 states. [Click here](#) for the report and check out [this summary article](#) by WJLA.

Juvenile justice commission wants to stop automatically charging youth as adults. "This practice fails to protect communities. Instead, it disproportionately impacts children of color, diverts resources away from critical services for children and families, places children in dangerous environments that more often result in subsequent violent or general criminal behavior," says the report, which was approved by the commission. "The problem is not one of minor procedural adjustments; it is structural." Read the report [here](#) and find the Maryland Matters summary [here](#).

Maryland prosecutors push back on plan to end automatic adult charges for youth offenders. While the Commission on Juvenile Justice Reform and Emerging and Best Practices argues the policy fails to improve public safety and instead harms young people, many of the states top prosecutors said they strongly disagree. [Read more](#) from FOX45.

North Baltimore residents won their fight against a locked treatment facility for youths. The state is ending plans to bring a youth detention center to North Baltimore, to the relief of neighbors who had strongly opposed its placement in a residential area. Find out more from the [Baltimore Banner](#).

Bates to cut ties with mayor's public safety office, citing 'cloak of secrecy'. Tracy King, a spokeswoman for Mayor Brandon Scott, said the mayor is "significantly distressed by this absurd approach." In the first paragraph of Bates' 7-page letter sent to the mayor, Bates said Scott rebuffed several requests to meet to discuss his concerns about MONSE. Emails obtained by [the Baltimore Banner](#) via a public information request show MONSE's director Stefanie Mavronis repeatedly attempted to meet with Bates and his staff in July and August without success.



UPCOMING EVENTS

Out For Justice X
The Community Group

YOUTH FOCUS GROUP

Out for Justice and The Community Group are hosting a youth-centered focus group to uplift the voices and experiences of young people across Baltimore City. This gathering will provide a safe and empowering space for youth to share their needs, dreams, and ideas for growth.

REGISTER TODAY

- ✓ Age 14 - 21 Welcome
- ✓ Safe and Empowering Space
- ✓ Help Shape Youth Programming
- ✓ Earn Service Learning Hours

**Saturday
December 20th, 2025
10 AM - 1 PM**

Knox Presbyterian Church
1300 N. Eden St. Baltimore MD 21213

OUT FOR JUSTICE



Youth Focus Group

Saturday, December 20, 10AM–1PM

1300 N Eden St, Baltimore MD

[Register here](#)

Out For Justice (OFJ) x The Community Group is hosting a Youth Focus Group designed to elevate youth voices and gather input on youth programming and support in Baltimore. If you have youth between ages 14-21 who are interested or would like more information, please contact YouthImpact@Out4Justice.org. You can register with [this link](#).

MYJC Youth Justice Lobby Day 2026


Monday, February 2, 4PM

St. Anne's Parish

199 Duke of Gloucester St, Annapolis MD

[RSVP here](#)

Join us on February 2 for Youth Justice Lobby Day! This legislative session we are lifting up youth voices in Annapolis, and bringing constituents from across the state to advocate for ending the traumatic and racist practice of charging children as adults. We also want our legislators to hear directly from you about what your schools, communities, and local youth need! [Click here](#) to RSVP.




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Join MYJC's
YOUTH JUSTICE LOBBY DAY

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 2 @ 4PM
ST. ANNE'S PARISH IN ANNAPOLIS

Visit bit.ly/MYJCLobbyDay26 or scan QR to learn more and RSVP ►



Have an upcoming event you want us to highlight in the January 2026 newsletter?

Email gail@advancemaryland.org.

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