

MARYLAND CURE

Maryland CURE
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A Path Forward

Vision: To fundamentally improve Maryland corrections practices by introducing a comprehensive set of bills to the Maryland legislature during the 2015 session that creates impetus for positive change and that has a high potential to be passed.

To do this, we will:

1. Form an alliance/coalition from the organizations and individuals who are committed to work together this year.
2. Identify and reach out to additional organizations and individuals who can inform, support and further our goal with an invitation to join the alliance/coalition.
3. Seek broad input about evidence-based, humane and effective practices and successful legislation in other States or jurisdictions to inform the bills we propose.
4. Develop a core set of proposed legislation that the alliance/coalition agrees to forward during the legislative session.
5. Deepen our knowledge and expertise in order to effectively lobby for these bills.

General Timeline:

Now through September:

- Decide on key legislative areas to be included in our set of bills
- Obtain commitment from prospective alliance/coalition organizations
- Create a Steering Committee to draft/refine bills
- Review and revise comprehensive set of bills based on input from the alliance/coalition members and organizations

September – November:

- Prepare for advocacy efforts
- Develop legislative partners and identify likely candidates to sponsor bills
- Continue to promote awareness of concerns related to criminal justice reform within our organizations and circles of friends and solicit support for our proposed legislation.

Thoughts to Reflect on

The voice in our head is going constantly. It's like the unwelcome in-law that just won't leave. It's with us constantly drumming on and on.

If we allow the mental chatter to be negative and self-criticizing, we are totally defeating ourselves. In essence, we become our own worst enemy. We say things to ourselves that are either complete exaggerations or aren't even true at all.

We all must actively monitor our mental chatter and change the messages if necessary. Frequently, it's good to find ways to stop the chatter like get actively involved in something interesting, read a book, etc. A lot of people find meditation a good way to stop the chatter.

That's by definition what meditation is.

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November – December

- Identify primary sponsors for introduction of key legislation

January – April

- Gather additional legislative support for passage of key legislation
- Requests citizens to contact legislators to support our bills

**Please join us in our efforts to really
make a difference in 2015!**

Recent Meeting in Columbia, MD:



Recent Meeting in Baltimore, MD:



What We Have Done for You

Advocacy Efforts on your behalf

January:

- Lea and Mary Brown-Bey visited MCI-W to discuss the legislative process.
- A visit with Senator Lisa Gladden and Senator Brian Frosh included a discussion on drafting a bill.

February:

- Heather Mizeur was invited to the Committee of Concerned Citizens meeting to share her platform. A team of returning incarcerated citizens joined to tell their story.
- Maryland Restorative Justice Initiative Town Hall Meeting with Walter Lomax was held on Feb 8
- Maryland CURE attended the Cultural African American Leaders meeting along with Carl Snowden and Jolene Ivey.
- Lea attended a panel discussion with Judge Philip T. Caroom and Ruth Ann Ogel from Maryland Parole and Probation
- Lea and Mary Pat both attended the International CURE Convention in Thailand!

March:

- The First Baltimore CURE East Meeting was held in the Oliver Community Center at 1400 E. Federal Street.
- An invitation was extended and accepted from JCI for a visit from Maryland CURE

April:

- At the Award Ceremony for Volunteers at JCI, Lea accepted an award on behalf of Maryland CURE
- Attended the Anne Arundel chapter of the NAACP meeting
- Attended the Third Annual Symposium on the Social Determinants of Health, Squandered Resources, and INCARCERATION, It's Consequences, Costs and Alternatives

May:

- Attended the International CURE workshop in Washington DC with Mary Brown-Bey and Etta Myers
- Attended a forum for delegates of Anne Arundel County sponsored by Larry Thomas of Empowerment Temple Church
- First Baltimore CURE West meeting at the Leonard E. Hicks Community Center 2718 West North Ave

June:

- Lea, Mary Brown-Bey and Etta Myers attended a workshop in Detroit Michigan sponsored by Nation Inside, a platform that connects and supports people building a movement to systematically challenge mass incarceration in the U.S. through networking and social media

As you can see Maryland CURE is making great strides in our effort to educate, communicate, and effect positive changes in the criminal justice system!

Why Rehabilitate?

An excerpt from an article by
Craig Cobb-Bey an inmate at JCI

There is a great need for change in the way The Division of Corrections (D.O.C.) is dealing with its lifers and their transitioning back into lesser security as well as parole. Over the last twenty years, these men whom society has cast a blind eye towards are making transformations of positive change through educational acquisition: emotional stability and maturity, continuous goal setting, and spirituality. It is duly noted that many of these men's achievements while incarcerated have been unparalleled. Academically, many of these men are continuously working in
(Continued next column)

Maryland Frees Close to 70 Inmates Over Faulty Jury Instructions



In 2012, Maryland's Court of Appeals ruled that the instructions state judges had been giving to juries in the 1980s before deliberations were fundamentally flawed. They ruled that anyone convicted under these conditions were entitled to a new trial. This ruling has resulted in the release of approximately 70 inmates who had been incarcerated for 30+ years. One hundred and eighty more are eligible for new trials. It could take years for all of these cases to be handled.

Most of those released to date were convicted in Baltimore. State's Attorney Gregg Bernstein's office carefully handled more than 50 releases. His team first checked the trial transcript to ensure that the flawed jury instructions were given and then explored whether the case could still be proven. They also sought out the victims' families and evaluated whether the prisoner posed any kind of a threat.

Walter Lomax, Executive Director of the Maryland Restorative Justice Initiative, and his team have worked diligently to welcome home those released after more than three decades of incarceration. Walter, himself tells us that most of the returning citizens have fared well, although some have had trouble adjusting from a prison culture where many decisions were made for them. To help them adjust, he has effectively run life-skills workshops.

Above is a picture of a picnic recently held for some of these returned citizens. What a great looking group!

Why Rehabilitate continued...

helping young men learn how to read and develop the skills they will need in obtaining their General Education Development G.E.D. certificate. In additional, most of these lifers continue to pursue enrollment in courses to further their own education.

.....confirmed by research analyst Ashley Nellis, Ph.D. and Ryan S. King of The Sentencing Project, who say of people serving life, "Recidivism rates for persons serving a life sentence are considerably lower than for the general released population." As stated by Nathaniel Chambers-El, "In those rare instances when a lifer returns to society, having gotten a break in court, he's like the erstwhile terminally ill patient who's been told by the doctor that he's completely cured: He lives life to the fullest. Every sunrise, every sunset holds meaning. And he takes nothing for granted, let alone his liberty.

There is a need for change in the way the Division of Corrections deals with its lifers, and the need for change is now.

**Report of the Governor's Commission on
Black Males – 1993
Maryland Court of Appeals Library**

Much has been written about racial disparity in sentencing.

On Aug 2, 2014 Attorney General Eric Holder stated during a speech in Philadelphia that data driven prison sentencing is unfair to minorities.

On July 10, 2014 The Sentencing Project submitted a shadow report regarding racial disparities in the justice system to the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD). Their report documents continuing disparities in incarceration, the imposition of juvenile life without parole, the death penalty, and felony disenfranchisement.

Here is another example:

The Maryland House of Delegates issued a resolution requesting the Governor to establish a Commission on black males to study the nature and extent of the problems in employment, health care, criminal justice, and education and the effect these problems have on African-American males in Maryland. Then Governor William Donald Schaefer headed this call and by Executive Order created a "Governor's Commission on Black Males". Then Delegate Elijah Cummings was appointed Chairman of the Commission.

From 1990 to 1993, a sweeping and detailed survey by a Commission composed of a broad cross-section of eminent Marylanders' participated as Commissioners and carried out the Governor's charge. The result of a comprehensive "Report of the Governor's Commission on Black Males in 1993", documenting that the problems facing black males in Maryland were unique and more dire than any problem facing any other segment of Maryland citizens.

This report called for dramatic and sustained actions of government, the community at large and all Marylanders' of good intentions to help remedy the identified social conditions that contributed to the waste of the potential of this group of Marylanders.

The Criminal Justice portion of this document could easily have been written in 2014! Recommendations included expanding programs to provider educational and training opportunities and an alternative approach to the "war on drugs"

1993 Report: <http://lawlib.state.md.us/record=b1036395>

2006-08 Report and Action Plans:

<http://lawlib.state.me.us/record=b1070092>

A quote from then Del. Cummings in a letter to Gov.Schaefer accompanying this **1993** report:

Our Commission has taken a snapshot of the plight of the Black Male in Maryland. The picture taking is over. It is now time to use that picture as a guide and catalyst for action. Our Commission looks forward to working with you, the Legislature, and the citizens of our great state to carry out the recommendations found in this report.

We encourage you to read this report and may we all work together to address the many issues that contribute to the over incarceration of our citizens.

Maryland CURE Receives Tax-Exempt Status!

After submitting an application and required documentation in January 2013, we finally received confirmation from the Internal Revenue Service that we are considered a 501-C-3 public charity. What this means is that any charitable contribution that you make to Maryland CURE qualifies for a tax deduction on your income tax return.



Please consider giving to this worthwhile cause. We are all volunteers and receive no remuneration. One hundred percent of dues and contributions are used to promote prison reform and produce and send the newsletter. On two occasions during the last legislative session, we rented a bus to bring returning citizens to Annapolis to attend hearings and support reform legislation.

Our dynamic President, Lea Green, wants to be able to do more. We would like to be able to issue quarterly newsletters. We have been limited about all we could accomplish due to lack of funds.

When you send us a contribution, we will send you an acknowledgement letter showing the amount of the contribution. This will be your back-up for including the deduction on your tax return.

There's much to do in prison reform. Please help us in any way you can.

Monthly Maryland CURE Meeting
Hicks Community Center -
2718 West North St.
Baltimore, MD 21216
Third Saturday of every month
10:30 to 12:30 p.m.

www.marylandcure.webs.com
marylandcuregroup@gmail.com

Dues for Membership

<input type="checkbox"/> Prisoners	\$5 (or 10 stamps)
<input type="checkbox"/> Individual	\$25
<input type="checkbox"/> Family	\$25
<input type="checkbox"/> Life	\$100

All donations are now tax deductible!

Please remember to send us an email if you're able to receive newsletters via email. This helps us reduce the cost of our newsletters!

Send us an email at marylandcuregroup@gmail.com

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Restorative Justice and the Second Chance Reauthorization Act

Restorative justice holds the concept that each person has intrinsic value and the capacity for change. Maryland CURE believes in restorative justice and supports the Second Chance Reauthorization Act.

The Second Chance Act will expire in September if we don't convince Congress to reauthorize it. The Second Chance act has enabled our communities to offer reentry services which are invaluable for men and women returning home from prisons, jails, and juvenile facilities. These services include mentoring, career training, family-based substance abuse treatment and more.

The Second Chance Act has helped reduce recidivism by providing funding for these support programs. The Second Chance Reauthorization Act will make sure that individuals continue to have the support they need to reclaim their lives and become contributing members of society.

If you have access to the internet, click here to support the Second Chance Reauthorization Act
<http://salsa4.salsalabs.com/dia/track.jsp?v=2&c=a5MRZMG8E%2F8AHOCr7eqBYNraCWI4WYyB!>

If you don't have access to the internet you can write to your representative and ask them to support the Second Chance Reauthorization Act. There is not much time but every voice heard makes a difference.

Maryland CURE is a Chapter of CURE, a national grass-roots organization dedicated to reducing crime through reform of the criminal justice system.

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Just as prisoners must be protected by rights, so must victims of crime. Maryland CURE encourages programs that offer opportunities for restitution and reconciliation between victims and offenders.

The ultimate goal of a restorative justice system is to meet the human needs of all parties involved.

Maryland CURE promotes pro-family policies throughout the system including adequate and reasonable visiting guidelines, affordable telephone privileges and useful transition programs.

We focus on educating the public on criminal justice issues and trying to enlist their support in advocating for prison reform.

We advocate change by coordinating citizen efforts to present concerns at the local state and national level.

"Someone was hurt before you, wronged before you, hungry before you, frightened before you, beaten before you, humiliated before you, raped before you... yet, someone survived... You can do anything you choose to do."

—*Maya Angelou*

"Nobody can go back and start a new beginning, but anyone can start today and make a new ending."

—*Maria Robinson*

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FIRST LAST, Org_or_Inmate
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Street Add 2
City, ST, ZIP Code