

COURT & PRISON REFORM

**JEWES UNITED
FOR JUSTICE**
THINK JEWISHLY. ACT LOCALLY.



KEY PARTNERS

ACLU of Maryland
Out for Justice
The People's Commission

Moses received the Torah at Sinai and transmitted it to Joshua, Joshua to the elders, and the elders to the prophets, and the prophets to the Men of the Great Assembly. They said three things: Be patient in the administration of justice, raise many disciples and make a fence round the Torah. - Pirkei Avot 1:1

Shammai used to say: make your study of the Torah a fixed practice; speak little, but do much; and receive all people with a pleasant countenance. - Pirkei Avot 1:15

JUFJ is guided by the Jewish value of Tzelem Elohim, that all people are created in the divine image, with inherent and equal dignity and value. All people should be treated with dignity and respect. Black people, people experiencing homelessness, those in poverty, and young people face marginalization and are often at risk of entering the justice system. We support decriminalization; prevention of unjust incarceration, and decarceration, helping people return to their families and communities from a place of incarceration.

WHO'S IMPACTED

Communities fighting marginalization, returning citizens, their families, their communities, and everyone who faces undue social and financial hardship as a result of their contact with the Maryland justice system. Our racist and classist justice system disproportionately targets Black and brown people and those unable to access health care, housing, and other commodities.

KEY COMMITTEES

- Senate Judicial Proceedings (JPR), Chair: Will Smith (Montgomery County)
- Senate Education, Health, & Environmental Affairs (EHE), Chair: Paul Pinsky (Prince George's County)
- House Judiciary (JUD), Chair: Luke Clippinger (Baltimore City)
- House Ways and Means (W&M), Chair: Anne Kaiser (Montgomery County)

February 2021

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LEGISLATIVE DETAILS

- **Overturn Veto for Women's Prerelease Facilities (SB684)**
 - WE WON! Legislation sponsored by Delegate Charlotte Crutchfield (Montgomery County) and Senator Mary Washington (Baltimore City) in 2020 was passed by the General Assembly, but vetoed by Governor Hogan. We successfully worked with our partners to override that veto and make the Gender-Responsive Prerelease Act (SB684) into law!
 - Prerelease programs help people nearing the end of their prison sentences secure employment, housing, drug treatment and mental health services, and family support. There were multiple such facilities for men in Maryland, but none for women, until the passage of SB684.
- **Decriminalize Poverty (HB238)**
 - Provide automatic expungements for non-convictions, ensuring that people seeking jobs cannot be unfairly stigmatized for interactions with the justice system.
 - This bill is sponsored by Delegate Wells.
- **Decriminalize Youth (HB315/SB136)**
 - Last year Del. Delegate Lierman (Baltimore City) introduced the Child Interrogation Protection Act, but the session was cut short before it was voted out of committee. We are supporting this legislation again, to ensure that youth have representation before they can be questioned by police.
 - This bill is sponsored by Delegate Bartlett and Senator Carter.
- **Decarceration (HB3/SB202)**
 - Remove the Governor from the parole process (Senate President Bill Ferguson and JPR Chair Will Smith are on record for getting this done in 2021).
 - This bill is sponsored by Delegates Clippinger and Queen, and Senator Kelley.

In addition to JUFJ's key legislative priorities this session, we have taken positions on other legislation related to Courts & Prisons Reform. Learn more at <https://jufj.org/court-prison-additional>.

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