



## Criminal Legal Reform in the 2025 Maryland Legislative Session: *Advocates' Retreat*

Monday, October 7  
9 am to 3:30 pm



### Criminal Legal Reform in the 2025 Maryland Legislative Session: Advocates' Retreat

**Purpose:** We are coming together to:

- Talk about the dominant narratives currently shaping policymakers' and public perceptions, and begin to develop a shared community safety narrative that reflects our shared values and resonates with the media and policymakers.
- Learn more about current criminal justice reform campaigns happening in Maryland, including the areas of potential rollbacks to existing reforms, and learn from and build upon the challenges and wins of last year.
- Deepen our coordination and collaboration as policy advocates, service providers, and community leaders, led by and continually informed by directly impacted voices.

**Outcomes:** Through our time together today, we hope to:

- Strengthen collaboration and improve coordination among advocates, service providers, and community leaders for the upcoming legislative session.
- Gain an understanding about the preliminary elements of a shared community safety narrative, which will be developed over time, that reflects collective values, resonates with policymakers, and addresses dominant public perceptions and media narratives.
- Increase awareness of current criminal justice reform campaigns in Maryland.

**Process:** Here is how we will spend our time:

## Criminal Legal Reform in the 2025 Maryland Legislative Session: Retreat Agenda

8:45-9:30 (45m)	<b>Breakfast and Check-in</b>	
9:30-9:55 (25m)	<p><b>Welcome and Opening Remarks</b></p> <p>Opening Remarks will provide background and insights on the significance of this second annual retreat, covering:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Purpose:</b> why we’re coming together today;</li> <li>• <b>Outcome:</b> what we hope to accomplish through our time together;</li> <li>• <b>Process:</b> how we will spend our time (including an overview of the agenda and logistics).</li> </ul>	<p>Heather Warnken, Executive Director, Center for Criminal Justice Reform, UBalt Law</p> <p>Erica J. Suter, Director, Innocence Project Clinic, UBalt Law, Assistant Public Defender, Maryland Office of the Public Defender</p> <p>Walter Lomax, Founder and Executive Director, Maryland Restorative Justice Initiative</p> <p>Trina Selden, Founder and Executive Director, Out for Justice</p>
9:55-11:10 (75m)	<p><b>Panel 1: A Conversation About the Narrative Landscape</b></p> <p>Panelists will discuss their perspective on the current narratives shaping the dominant stories on public safety and criminal legal reform across Maryland and the surrounding region. Key questions include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the dominant narratives?</li> <li>• What challenges do we need to confront when talking about youth versus adults?</li> <li>• Who are the key people to reach and who are effective</li> </ul>	<p><b>Moderator:</b> Alice Wilkerson, Executive Director, Advance Maryland</p> <p><b>Panelists:</b> Lawrence Grandpre, Director of Research, Leaders of a Beautiful Struggle</p> <p>Patrice Sulton, Founder and Executive Director, DC Justice Lab</p>

	<p>messengers to help shape the narrative?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● How do narratives differ across Maryland, the region, and nationally, and how do they influence each other?</li> <li>● When we think about a shared community safety narrative, what are elements we view as critical?</li> </ul>	<p>Brian Tashman, Deputy Director, Vera Action, Vera Institute of Justice</p> <p>Kam Bridges, Senior Policy Advocate Job Opportunities Task Force</p>
11:10-11:40 (30m)	<b>Questions, Reflections, Ideas</b>	Microphones will be passed throughout the audience for any attendees to weigh in.
11:40-12:30 (50m)	<b>Lunch</b>	Attendees may enjoy their lunch in the common areas of Floors 0 and .5 (including the outdoor courtyard area), or in classrooms 016, 018, 019, 021.
12:30-1:55 (85m)	<p><b>Panel 2: Shaping the 2025 Legislative Agenda</b></p> <p>Panelists will share information about top campaign(s) and bill(s) they are working on. This may include utilizing their time to discuss multiple pieces of an organization/ coalition’s agenda if it contains more than one bill. Key questions include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● What are the issues this bill/campaign is trying to address, and why is this the right solution?</li> <li>● What do you anticipate being the main obstacles or challenges?</li> <li>● What is needed to be successful?</li> <li>● Are there specific opportunities among the advocacy community</li> </ul>	<p><b>Moderator:</b> Olinda Moyd, Director, Decarceration &amp; Reentry Clinic, American University Washington College of Law, Executive Board, Maryland Alliance for Justice Reform</p> <p><b>Panelists:</b> Donald Bovello, Maryland Second Look Coalition</p> <p>Crystal Francis, Executive Board, Maryland Alliance for Justice Reform</p> <p>Elizabeth Hilliard, Director of Government</p>

	<p>to increase awareness, collaboration and/or other forms of needed support?</p>	<p>Relations, Maryland Office of the Public Defender</p> <p>T. Shekhiyah Braveheart, Advocacy Associate, Justice Policy Institute</p> <p>Christopher Dews, Assistant Vice President, Cornerstone Government Affairs, Maryland Expungement Coalition</p> <p>Ryan Ewing, Campaign Strategist at the Clean Slate Initiative</p> <p>Marquis Howard, Organizer, Baltimoreans United in Leadership Development</p> <p>Sarah Couture, Regional Director, Fines and Fees Justice Center</p>
<p>1:55-2:05 (10m)</p>	<p><b>Break / Transition / Stretch Your Legs</b></p>	
<p>2:05-2:45 (40 min)</p>	<p><b>Panel 3: Anticipated Defense</b></p> <p>Panelists will discuss known threats of rollbacks of existing reforms and other areas of potential anticipated defense, i.e., a proposed billion dollar jail, and threats to roll back the Child Interrogation Protection Act, good time credits and other critical areas of sound evidence- and community-backed policy. This panel will draw on lessons learned and experiences related to defensive work last session, including surrounding H.B. 814. Like Panel 2, this session aims to highlight for attendees</p>	<p><b>Panelists:</b></p> <p>Yanet Amanuel, Public Policy Director, ACLU of Maryland</p> <p>Elizabeth Hilliard, Director of Government Relations, Maryland Office of the Public Defender</p> <p>Dayvon Love, Director of Public Policy, Leaders of a Beautiful Struggle</p>

	<p>known opportunities for increasing collaboration, awareness and other areas of support for these efforts.</p>	<p>Keith Wallington, Director of Advocacy, Justice Policy Institute</p>
<p>2:45-3:15 (30m)</p>	<p><b>The Broader Criminal Justice Reform Agenda: Open Mic Time</b></p> <p>Guided by a facilitator, attendees will have the opportunity to engage in informal but structured dialogue about the day’s agenda thus far, and to share additional updates or aspects of the criminal legal reform landscape that have not been addressed earlier in day. This may include budding campaigns that may still be forming.</p>	<p><b>Facilitator:</b> Hannibal G. Williams II Kemerer, Chief of Staff to the Public Defender, Maryland Office of the Public Defender</p>
<p>3:15-3:30 (15m)</p>	<p><b>Reflections and What’s Next</b></p> <p>Attendees will share closing thoughts and takeaways from the retreat dialogue. Organizers will highlight resources we hope attendees are taking from our time together, including mechanisms for working together and remaining in touch.</p>	<p><b>Moderator:</b> Heather Warnken, Executive Director, Center for Criminal Justice Reform, UBalt Law</p>
<p>3:30-4:30 (60m)</p>	<p><b>After Hours Social</b></p>	<p>Optional dessert reception to increase opportunity for relationship building, networking, and organic dialogue across the advocacy community.</p>