

Collateral Consequences of Convictions Workgroup

Meeting Minutes

Thursday, September 1, 2016

Members in attendance: Judge Alex Williams, The Judge Alexander Williams, Jr. Center for Education, Justice & Ethics; Shaina Hernandez, Greater Baltimore Committee; Jeff Tosi, Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation; Christi Megna, Department of Health and Mental Hygiene; Glenn Fueston, Governor's Office of Crime Control and Prevention; Caryn Aslan, Job Opportunities Task Force; Yariela Kerr-Donovan, Johns Hopkins HR Department; Rachel Sessa, Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services; Mike O'Halloran, National Federation for Independent Business, Maryland; Mike Brenton, Ahold USA; and John Huffington, Livings Classrooms.

Other guests in attendance: Victoria Wilkins, Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation; Scott Espenscheid, AmericaWorks; Madison Getty, Governor's Office of Crime Control and Prevention; Don Hogan, Governor's Office of Crime Control and Prevention; Steve DeBoy, Governor's Office of Crime Control and Prevention; Cara Sullivan, Governor's Legislative Office; Juan Arvelo, Maryland Alliance for Justice Reform; Robert Brown, Maryland Alliance for Justice Reform; Jim Rose, Maryland Alliance for Justice Reform; Susannah Rose, Maryland Alliance for Justice Reform; Brian Alexander, Governor's Office for Children; Wynee Hawk, Department of Health and Mental Hygiene; Barbara Thomas, Maryland Alliance for Criminal Justice Reform; Eric Bryant, Rifkin, Weiner, Livingston, LLC; Lorraine Smith, Department of Mental Health and Hygiene; and Kristen Neville, Department of Mental Health and Hygiene.

I. Welcome and Introduction

Judge Williams called the meeting to order at 1:01 PM. He welcomed everyone to the first meeting of the Collateral Consequences of Convictions Workgroup and reviewed the agenda for the meeting. Judge Williams thanked everyone for dedicating their time to this important issue. Every member had the opportunity to introduce themselves to the rest of the Workgroup and attendees.

II. Scope of Workgroup

The Workgroup will blend two tasks—one laid out by Governor Hogan to develop a set of recommendations to minimize collateral consequences which impede reentry without jeopardizing public safety. This could include difficulty getting a job or starting a business, challenges accessing public services or programs such as student loans and housing, or trouble volunteering in the community. Our other task is the one laid out by the Justice Reinvestment Act to make recommendations regarding potential barriers to employment, licensing, and entrepreneurship for individuals with a criminal record, including the denial, suspension, or revocation of occupational licenses for criminal convictions as well as the criminalization of occupational license violations, including the practicing of an occupation without a license.

III. Justice Reinvestment Act

Cara Sullivan

The Justice Reinvestment Act represents the most comprehensive criminal justice reform to pass in a generation. It works to hold individual offenders accountable for their actions and the government accountable for its responsibility to spend tax dollar wisely and ensure safe communities. The Act emphasizes treatment for those struggling with addiction, provides an opportunity to elevate the voice of victims, and strengthens community supervision through evidence-based practices.

Caryn Aslan

The Maryland Justice Reinvestment Conference will take place on Thursday, October 27, 2016, at the University of Maryland. This is an opportunity to discuss the provisions in the Justice Reinvestment Act that will go into effect on October 1.

IV. Data Presentation and Discussion

Jinney Smith

The main data presentation to the Workgroup will be on Monday, September 26th. Some topics of discussion will include employment and occupational licensure. The research that will inform the work of this group is relatively limited because there is little research on the various remedies that are currently being used to measure collateral consequences strategies. There is also a lack of Maryland specific data.

VII. Public Forum

Juan Avelo, Maryland Alliance for Justice Reform

The discussion about collateral consequences should also include people that are in the sex offender registry. There are three tiers for sex offenders and tier one is for nonviolent, low risk offenses. There is no reason to alarm the public for such cases and recommend creating a nonpublic registry only for use by law enforcement. This would give the low risk individuals the opportunity to find employment and housing.

Oscar Barbarian, University of Maryland College Park

The primary focus seems to be improving employment though licensure. The scope of the committee's work should also consider barriers such education, health, housing, and parental status. These are all important factors that can help with improving the lives of individuals.

Robert Brown, MAJR

Many returning citizens are often unaware of their rights and taking on each case individually is the best way to deal with the issue instead of looking at the whole population as a statistic.

IX. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 2:03 PM.