



End of Session Report for Highlighted Maryland Legislation 2015

Keeping Youth out of Adult Jails passed!

HB 618/SB 172 ensures that all youth shall be held in a juvenile detention facility unless: (1) The youth is released on bail, recognizance or other pre-trial condition, (2) There is no capacity in the juvenile facility, (3) The court finds that detention in a secure juvenile facility would pose a risk of harm to the child or others. This overturns a law that has been on the books since 1993 which automatically placed some youth in adult jails based on the accused offense.

The Maryland Clean Energy Advancement Act of 2015 was voted down in the Senate Finance Committee.

HB 377/SB 373 proposed to incrementally increase the percentage of energy that must come from renewable/clean energy sources from 20% to 40% by 2025, with specific targets for wind and solar power. During the committee hearings an amendment was offered to cap the required increase at 25% by 2020. The senators showed particular interest in the solar energy provisions for its potential economic opportunity. In addition, the involvement of the faith community was specifically touted by one senator who asked a coalition member about the reason for all the heightened attention to this particular bill.

Expungement of the Conviction of Crime That Is No Longer a Crime passed!

HB 124 /SB 651 allows a person to file for a petition to expunge a crime if the act on which the conviction was based is no longer a crime. This law will make it easier for people with certain past convictions to get their foot in the door for a job interview, apartment rental application, etc.

Maryland Healthy Working Families Act did not make it out of the Committees.

HB 385/SB 40 would allow employees who work in Maryland to earn paid sick time. Employees would earn 1 hour of paid sick leave for every 30 hours an employee works.

The issue gained significant support from legislators but ultimately did not make it to the Floor for a vote. A letter from the chairs of the Senate and House Committees to the coalition requests that the coalition work with other stakeholders in the months ahead and bring back a revised bill to the 2016 General Assembly. Yes, we got their attention!

Rape Survivor Family Protection Act did not make it out of committee.

HB 503/SB78 would allow rape victims who become pregnant as a result of rape to ask the family law court to end the parental rights of their rapist. The high standard of clear and convincing proof used in other termination of parental rights cases would be required.

Maryland Second Chance Act of 2015 passed!

HB 244/SB 526 allows an individual with a criminal conviction to petition the court to shield specific non-violent misdemeanors from the public after a specified period of time with no additional convictions. The court system and law enforcement will still have access to the shielded records. This bill has been re-introduced over the years and was endorsed by the Maryland Interfaith Legislative Committee (MILC) every year.

A few other successes shared by the Maryland Interfaith Legislative Committee:

- A bill was passed to make it easier for former foster care youth to get a tuition exemption for higher education.
- A task force was established to look at how to provide healthcare for those who remain uninsured because they do not meet eligibility requirements.
- Bills that would have made it harder for individuals to prove their eligibility to vote were successfully opposed.