



MARYLAND EQUITABLE JUSTICE COLLABORATIVE



Established by the Office of the Attorney General and Office of the Public Defender

***For Immediate  
Release:***

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## **Attorney General Anthony G. Brown and Public Defender Natasha M. Dartigue Applaud Successful Passage of Legislation Reforming the Criminal Legal System**

### ***New Laws Adopt Recommendations of the Maryland Equitable Justice Collaborative***

**BALTIMORE, MD (April 9, 2025)** – As the 2025 Maryland General Assembly session concludes, Attorney General Anthony G. Brown and Public Defender Natasha M. Dartigue applaud the passage of a set of bills based on Maryland Equitable Justice Collaborative (MEJC) [recommendations](#) presented in their inaugural report.

“These new laws represent a critical step forward in addressing the deep injustices caused by mass incarceration in Maryland,” **said Attorney General Brown**. “In just 18 months, we’ve made meaningful progress—offering relief to those who have been incarcerated far too long, particularly Black youth, and ensuring that individuals who are seriously ill or elderly have a chance to leave prison and live out their lives with dignity. While these reforms bring much-needed hope, our work is far from finished. These changes are just the beginning, and we will continue to fight for broader reforms to ensure that all Marylanders have access to a truly equitable and just criminal legal system.

“The new laws are not simply policy—they are about real people, real families, and real communities finally seeing a path toward justice. Collectively these laws will transform the lives of thousands of Marylanders, putting millions of dollars back into our state's coffers while striking at the heart of the racial injustices that have fueled our broken system of mass incarceration for far too long,” said **Public Defender Dartigue**. “While they represent only a small fraction of what is needed to reduce the racial disparities in the criminal legal system, there are important first steps. We stand firmly committed to ensuring these hard-won reforms are implemented and will continue to raise our voices ever louder for the deeper, more profound changes that our communities desperately need and rightfully demand.”

In October 2023, Attorney General Brown and Maryland Public Defender Natasha Dartigue entered a historic partnership to establish the Maryland Equitable Justice Collaborative (MEJC). MEJC was formed to address the racial disparities of mass incarceration in Maryland. Its membership includes more than 40 representatives from state agencies, academia, community groups, subject matter experts, and directly impacted citizens. In March 2025, MEJC released its first report detailing 18 specific recommendations targeting this crisis in our State.

MEJC supported the following pieces of legislation aligned with those recommendations

- **Geriatric and Medical Parole Reform (HB1123 and SB0181)** expands access to early release for aging and seriously ill incarcerated individuals, a significant step forward in humane justice reform. (Related to MEJC Recommendation No. 9)
- **Second Look Act (HB853)** enables courts to review long sentences after a period of incarceration for people convicted of a crime occurring when they were between the ages of 18 and 25, creating a vital pathway toward redemption and acknowledging individual

transformation. (Related to MEJC Recommendation No. 13)

- **Restorative Practices in Public Schools (SB0068 / HB0197)** creates a framework for shifting from punitive responses to restorative approaches to address the criminalization of school behavior. (Related to MEJC Recommendation No. 15)

Attorney General Brown and Public Defender Dartigue extend their appreciation to the MEJC workgroup chairs, members, and partners for their commitment and involvement in advancing these protections for the people of Maryland.

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