

STATE OF MARYLAND

June 3, 2015

Mr. Adam Gelb  
Director  
Public Safety Performance Project  
The Pew Charitable Trusts  
901 E Street NW, 10th Floor  
Washington, DC 20004

Ms. Denise O'Donnell  
Director  
Bureau of Justice Assistance  
Office of Justice Programs  
U.S. Department of Justice  
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20530-0001

Dear Mr. Gelb and Ms. O'Donnell:

We write to express Maryland's interest in receiving technical assistance from the Public Safety Performance Project of the Pew Charitable Trusts as part of the Justice Reinvestment Initiative. We invite you to join us in our efforts to develop fiscally sound, evidence-based, and data-driven sentencing and correctional policies across our State's criminal justice system. With your help we aim to improve public safety, reduce recidivism, protect the rights of crime victims and criminal defendants, and lower State correctional facility populations and costs. We believe the inter-branch, evidence-based approach of the Justice Reinvestment Initiative will help us achieve this mission.

Between 2008 and 2013, the majority of states cut both their imprisonment and crime rates, achieving the dual distinction of more public safety and less incarceration. Maryland is among these states that have seen both its crime rate and incarceration rate decrease in the past five years. Yet, while the average daily population in Maryland's state correctional facilities has

Mr. Adam Gelb  
Ms. Denise O'Donnell  
Technical Assistance Request  
June 3, 2015  
Page 2

fallen by about 10% in the past decade from just over 23,000 inmates to about 20,700 inmates in 2015, Maryland continues to incur substantial costs for correctional facilities. The Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services (DPSCS) operates 27 State correctional and Baltimore City pretrial facilities, as well as supervises offenders in the community who are on parole or probation. DPSCS has over 11,000 employees and a fiscal 2016 budget in excess of \$1.35 billion. Despite the 10% decrease in the inmate population since 2006 the DPSCS budget has increased by 35% in that time, when adjusted for inflation. In fiscal 2015 DPSCS accounts for 13.8% of the total State workforce and 7.3% of general fund expenditures.

In addition, in 2014 there were nearly 12,000 offenders in local detention centers (including Baltimore City). Of the approximately 8,200 offenders being held in county jails (not including Baltimore City) over 50% were being held pretrial. In Baltimore City, pretrial detainees account for nearly 88% of the population held in the detention center.

We aim to accelerate our achievements and lock in better, more cost-effective outcomes for public safety and taxpayers from Maryland's criminal justice system. Our state has made efforts to reduce recidivism and decrease imprisonment rates, but policy efforts too often remain focused on narrow pieces of the criminal justice system. This time must be different. Maryland cannot afford inaction, especially as we face the devastating health and public safety consequences of a heroin epidemic. We need to develop and implement a comprehensive reform package that accelerates our movement toward more public safety and less incarceration.

These circumstances justify a thorough examination of Maryland's pretrial, sentencing, and corrections policies and practices. During the 2015 legislative session, the General Assembly passed Senate Bill 602 (Chapter 42) with strong bipartisan support and Governor Hogan signed it into law on April 14. This bill established the Justice Reinvestment Coordinating Council (JRCC).

We request that Pew work with JRCC, using a data-driven approach, to develop a statewide framework of sentencing and corrections policies to further reduce the State's incarcerated population, reduce spending on corrections, and reinvest in strategies to increase public safety and reduce recidivism. JRCC is required to submit a report to the Governor and to the General Assembly on the findings and recommendations of the council on or before December 31, 2015. As State leaders requesting assistance, we commit ourselves to:

- Providing Pew with full and timely access to data and policy makers needed for a thorough review of Maryland's criminal justice system, and for the development of policies tailored to the unique trends and features of Maryland's criminal justice system;
- Assisting JRCC in publishing its findings and recommendations in a report in December 2015;

Mr. Adam Gelb  
Ms. Denise O'Donnell  
Technical Assistance Request  
June 3, 2015  
Page 3

- Use the recommendations of the Justice Reinvestment Coordinating Council as the foundation for legislative and administrative action in 2016; and
- Strongly considering the reinvestment of a portion of the savings generated by the policies and practices adopted through this process into programs and practices shown by research to reduce recidivism and improve public safety.

To enhance this partnership, Maryland requests that Pew:

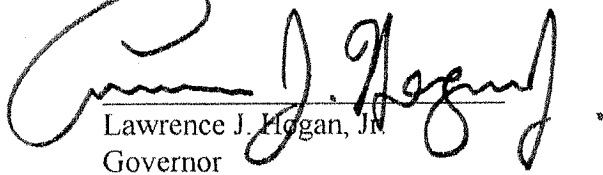
- Support the staff and chairman of the JRCC with facilitation and administration needs;
- Conduct research on and analysis of Maryland's criminal justice system, including analyzing State correctional facility population trends and cost growth;
- Assess our pretrial, sentencing, and corrections laws, policies, and practices;
- Help develop policy options that will ensure public safety, hold offenders accountable, and control corrections costs, by:
  - educating members about evidence-based practices in sentencing and corrections, including providing case studies from other states;
  - facilitating the development of recommendations based on data and research; and
  - projecting the impact of individual and overlapping policy options on correctional populations and costs.
- Assist in drafting consensus findings and recommendations to be issued by JRCC in anticipation of the 2016 legislative session;
- Assist the General Assembly, the Office of the Governor, and JRCC in educating the media, public, and policymakers regarding JRCC's goals, findings, and recommendations; and
- Work with the General Assembly, the Office of the Governor, and JRCC as needed, in drafting and advancing legislation to be introduced in the 2016 legislative session.


With public safety as our top priority, we are committed to addressing issues relating to Maryland's State correctional facility population and the rise in corrections costs with data-driven and evidence-based policies. We are dedicated to advancing a comprehensive set of reforms that yield a more effective and efficient criminal justice system. By establishing JRCC in Senate Bill 602, Maryland has shown its willingness to review its existing practices and consider recommendations to improve its sentencing and corrections laws and policies.

We look forward to working with Pew and the Bureau of Justice Assistance on the Justice Reinvestment Initiative to advance our efforts and to improve public safety. Thank you for considering our request.


Mr. Adam Gelb  
Ms. Denise O'Donnell  
Technical Assistance Request  
June 3, 2015  
Page 4


Sincerely,


  
Lawrence J. Hogan, Jr.  
Governor

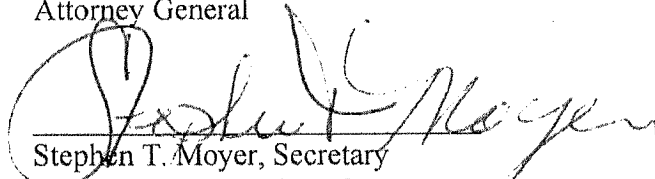
  
Mary-Elle Barbera  
Chief Judge

  
Thomas V. Mike Miller, Jr.  
President of the Senate

  
Michael E. Busch,  
Speaker of the House

  
Brian E. Frosh  
Attorney General

  
Christopher B. Shank, Executive Director,  
Governor's Office of Crime Control  
and Prevention

  
Stephen T. Moyer, Secretary  
Department of Public Safety  
and Correctional Services