



# Randallstown

P.O. Box 731 Randallstown, MD 21133

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## Resource Package

The Randallstown NAACP poll points to two main issues of concern: Crime and Education. Specifically, the poll suggests local and state governments take active steps to reduce violence and ensure public safety. The Randallstown NAACP suggests that the lack of appropriate resources, failing school systems, lack of accountability and structural racism are fuelling the rise in violence. The Randallstown NAACP has put together a comprehensive approach to fill the gaps in legislation and policy. The goal is to improve public safety while ensuring the criminal justice system is fair for all. This package will touch on five topics to make our neighborhoods vibrant and safe:

1. Education
2. Resources and Accountability for at risk juveniles
3. Department of Parole and Probation monitoring offenders effectively.
4. Solutions on repeat violent offenders
5. Interrupting Structural Racism

### **1. EDUCATION**

“Education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire”, goes the quote oft-attributed to Irish poet William Butler Yeats. But how best to light that fire. While the high school dropout rate poses a significant risk to Maryland, there are early warning signs that can be used to chart a different path for children. We know that the achievement gap can be identified early, and children who are most at-risk of school failure are more likely to attend lower-quality elementary schools. We also know that reading and math proficiency are fundamental skills essential for later learning. It is well documented that children who do not achieve reading proficiency by third grade are more likely to be retained, have behavior problems, have low self-esteem and drop out of school.

The Randallstown NAACP is recommending legislation and/or MSDE policy with the following characteristics:

1. Mandatory Pre K for all children of color, special needs children and any children under the poverty line,
2. Schools should place their best teachers in K-3 grades,
3. Mentor teachers for all teachers in elementary school,
4. Remedial and Enrichment programs for all children of color and all low performing schools,
5. Summer programs for all students of color and all low performing schools,
6. Create Police Athletic League centers, Recreation Activity centers, Teen centers and youth programming,
7. Ensure title one funds are being used to support social emotional learning, extra instruction in reading and mathematics, materials of instruction, as well as after school and summer programs. Funds should not be used solely to buy additional teachers.
8. Educational Options for students who are attending failing schools.

1. Valerie Lee and David Burkham, *Inequality at the Starting Gate: Social Background Differences in Achievement as Children Begin School* (Washington, D.C.: Economic Policy Institute, 2002), 74. 2. *Ibid.*, 82-88. 3. Catherine Snow, M. Susan Burns and Peg Griffin, *Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children* (Washington, D.C.: National Academy Press, 1998), 32. 4. Donald Hernandez, *Double Jeopardy: How Third-grade Reading Skills and Poverty Influence High School Graduation* (Baltimore, MD: Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2011), 74, <http://www.aecf.org/m/resourcedoc/AECF-DoubleJeopardy-2012-Full.pdf>.

## **2. RESOURCES FOR AT RISK JUVENILES**

As crime continues to plague Maryland in cities, counties large and small, violent crimes involving juveniles continue to grab headlines and frustrate Marylanders, local leaders and law enforcement. Juvenile cases remanded to the juvenile system are at an all time high. The three-year statewide re-arrest rate for out-of-home, committed placements was 67.6% and the reconviction rate was 34.2%. What is being done currently is not working.

### **Recommendations**

1. Recommend that a full program evaluation be conducted pursuant to MD Code Annotated, State Government § 2-1235. The full evaluation would provide a comprehensive look at the Department of Juvenile Services (DJS). Some areas that might be scrutinized could include: accountability of juveniles, the use and value of electronic monitoring, educational services, and resources to ensure juveniles don't reoffend.
2. The primary purpose is to expand community-based services and training to provide treatment options for juveniles across the state, specifically services and training that are evidence-based and outcomes oriented. The targeted population is youth who have been referred to DJS by the police.
3. All juveniles charged with a felony must be reviewed by a prosecutor and DJS and only the prosecutor can divert a case.

4. Amend § 11-604 - Payers of restitution with following sanctions:

First Juvenile Offense the court will impose parenting classes, or a 250 dollar fee.

Second Juvenile Offense the court will impose parenting classes/ counseling or a 500 dollar fee.

Third Juvenile Offense the court will impose a fee of \$1000. This fee can be waived/ reimbursed if the child doesn't reoffend for two years.

5. Revisit the current Juvenile Justice legislation to modify and make changes to ensure juveniles are being appropriately held accountable and receiving appropriate resources.

### **3. DEPARTMENT OF PAROLE AND PROBATION (DPP) TO MONITOR OFFENDERS EFFECTIVELY.**

Over the past quarter-century, researchers have identified a core set of strategies that can significantly reduce recidivism and thereby increase public safety and cut spending. These include scientifically validated tools to assess people's risk levels and treatment needs; individual case management plans that match people to appropriate supervision levels and treatment programs; cognitive behavioral and other evidence-based therapies to change behavior; and swift, certain, and proportionate sanctions and rewards for violations and compliance.

This analysis suggests that the system is struggling to carry out its mandate. Progress will necessitate more than gradual adoption of specific practices and programs; it will require that the system shrink substantially and embrace major changes in policy and mission.

Striking the right balance between accountability for violations and new crimes, and incentives for compliance and progress can improve outcomes.

#### **Recommendations**

Recommend that a full program evaluation be conducted pursuant to MD Code Annotated, State Government § 2-1235. The full evaluation would provide a comprehensive look at DPP. Some areas that might be scrutinized could include: the use and value of electronic monitoring; the effectiveness of pre-sentence investigation; the ability of the current risk assessment tool to accurately and consistently identify the needs of individuals and the probability of reoffense; the ability of DPP agents to meet the individual needs of supervisees given current resources; the effectiveness of graduated sanctions; the use and value of enhanced supervision and collaboration between DPP and relevant public safety agencies with respect to individuals convicted or charged with violent crimes; and

the compliance of supervisees, best practices to improve compliance, and the efficacy of reporting technical violations.

#### **4. SOLUTIONS ON REPEAT VIOLENT OFFENDERS**

There are two general theories of repeat offending patterns. One theory is that some people are highly disposed to behave criminally, and this leads them to sustained criminal careers in which they offend frequently. These “lifetime persistent” offenders begin offending early and have long crime careers. They are distinguished from “adolescent limited” offenders, who start later and finish earlier, as the name suggests.

Another theory suggests that one criminal act begets another. That is, involvement in one crime increases the probability of further offending. For example, someone convicted of a crime finds it more difficult to resume a law-abiding life, either because they have fewer job opportunities or because they are shunned by normally law-abiding members of the community. Therefore, they persist in criminal behavior and associate with others who are in a similar position. It might also be that the rewards of successfully committing crime reinforce the criminal behavior and make persistent offending more likely.

Both theories play a part in producing repeat offending patterns. Much has been written on efforts to identify and deal more effectively with individuals who have strong dispositions to commit crime and to avoid inadvertently precipitating high-rate offending among those who might otherwise not be drawn into criminal careers.

In 2022, in Baltimore County 67% of the violent crimes were from repeat violent offenders. Over 70% of violent offenders arrested were known to police. Over 30% were under the supervision of Parole and Probation. A third of the homicide suspects were from the City of Baltimore.

#### **Recommendations**

1. A full program evaluation must be conducted pursuant to MD Code Annotated, State Government § 2-1235 for Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services (DPSCS). This full evaluation would provide a comprehensive look at DPSCS and how inmates are given skills & educational training to integrate individuals into society and ensure they don't reoffend.
2. Create legislation coined Maryland's Prisoner Release Reoffender (PRR) to interrupt the repeat violent offender crisis. Individuals sentenced to PRR are not first-time, low-level offenders. The sentencing provisions of PRR do not apply to less serious misdemeanors or infractions, even when committed repeatedly. In order to be sentenced under PRR, an individual must have previously committed

one or more serious, felony (§7-101,) crimes for which they served time in a state or federal prison or are on escape status. The offender must then commit or attempt to commit another felony within 3 years of their release from prison for the prior offense. If the offender commits a crime 3 years and 1 day after release, they would not be considered eligible for sentencing under PRR. If a defendant is found guilty of a 2nd crime (which must be a felony and a crime of violence §7-101,) during this 3-year window, the court must impose the statutory maximum sentence for that crime. Under the statute, if a person is determined to be a PRR and is found guilty of a felony that is punishable by a 15-year sentence, the court must impose a 15-year sentence. If the person is found guilty of a forcible felony that is punishable by a life sentence, the court must impose a life sentence. A person sentenced as a PRR must serve 100 percent of the sentence and is not eligible for parole or any form of early release.

3. Develop standardized, evidence-based programs to reduce recidivism. Research shows that recidivism risk can be effectively reduced through evidence-based programming that targets criminogenic needs, such as courses in cognitive behavioral therapy and other topics.

#### Other Recommendations

1. Increase the funding for Special Assistant U. S. Attorneys.\*

\*Since September 2022, State-funded Special Assistant United States Attorneys have indicted 30 defendants for federal gun crimes, including charging 10 defendants for illegal possession of a firearm within 1,000 feet of Baltimore schools

2. Make possession of a stolen gun/ ghost gun a felony. However a judge can reduce a felony to a misdemeanor if the following are met: completion of sentence, three years have passed, no new charges have been filed.
3. Decrease the number of outstanding warrants in the City of Baltimore.\* Double the size of the WATF, Create another task force run by the State Police. Have a third warrant task force specifically focused on Baltimore County, Anne Arundel County, Howard County and Harford County staffed by the state police and these jurisdictions.

\*Baltimore City has over 43,000 warrants with 25,800 being felony warrants that are unserved. This means violent offenders that should be off the streets but are committing other violent crimes. In comparison Austin TX has 3,355 warrants with 1,198 felony warrants, Montgomery County, MD has 14,000 warrants with 1,351 felony warrants.

4. Carjackings are on the rise in Maryland. Set a minimum sentence of three years for any car jacking, Set minimum sentence of ten years for an armed carjacking.\*

\*DC Unarmed Carjacking is 7 year minimum sentence Armed carjacking is 15 years minimum sentence no parole

NJ 5 years minimum no parole for unarmed carjacking, 10-30 years for armed with no parole.

VA 15 minimum sentence for carjacking

PA 5 year minimum for an armed carjacking

## **5. INTERRUPT STRUCTURAL RACISM**

A large body of research has documented the important role of US state-level social, economic, and policy context in shaping unequal treatment against Black Americans. This is because federalism, as defined in the Tenth Amendment of the United States Constitution, delegates to the states all powers not explicitly outlined or outlawed by the Constitution. Assertions of these state-level powers have ranged from the enslavement of Africans in the earliest points of US history to how education, housing, and infrastructure are financed and implemented. Since the 1980s the devolution of federal authority and preemption of local policy have increasingly consolidated power at the state level, making the states especially powerful influences on health, employment, education, incarceration, real estate, taxes, health care, and many other factors affecting people's lives. Many of these policies and practices are not race-neutral in their intentions, implementation, or effects. In fact, US states have a long history of contributing to racial oppression, from the de jure racism of the Jim Crow era to the contemporary de facto racism evident in policies and practices such as voter disenfranchisement and mandatory minimum sentencing.

Enslaved Africans and Black Americans were important in shaping Maryland's history. The commodities they produced provided the foundation for Maryland's economy and formed its society. Black Marylanders have endured poverty and discrimination into the twenty-first century. Slavery's influence can still be felt, as the recent debates about the state song, reparations and the City of Greenbelt creating a reparations commission. In 2000, recognizing slavery's importance to Maryland's history, the legislature created the Commission to Coordinate the Study, Commemoration, and Impact of Slavery's History and Legacy. Seven years later, both houses of the Maryland legislature and the Annapolis City Council officially expressed their "regret for the role Maryland played in instituting and maintaining slavery." However, the State of Maryland has not taken any direct actions to create a system of redress for the egregious injustices bestowed upon Black Marylanders. This package should include individual and collective public benefits that simultaneously builds wealth and eliminates debt among Black Marylanders. The Randallstown NAACP is requesting state policy & legislation around the following:

### **1. Homeownership Subsidies**

Racial disparities in homeownership are generally recognized as a major contributor to the vast racial wealth gap. Accordingly, a broad range of organizations and advocacy groups have called upon the government and the financial industry to spur or support Black homeownership. The Urban Institute and the National Fair Housing Alliance have

made it a centerpiece of their policy advocacy, creating a “Keys Unlock Dreams” initiative to promote it. This proposal emphasizes down payment assistance with the goal of three million new Black homeowners by 2030. The National Community Reinvestment Coalition set a goal of 60 percent Black homeownership by 2040.

A more recent attempt to subsidize homeownership on a racial basis is an interesting initiative adopted by a Chicago suburb. The city of Evanston created a “reparations” fund in 2019, with the ultimate goal of distributing \$10 million in housing assistance.

## 2. Baby Bonds and Other Wealth-Building Tools

The median white family holds **about eight times as much wealth** as the median Black family. Despite lower rates of homeownership among Black families, this disparity is even worse when real estate assets are excluded. There is broad recognition in the structural racism literature that the racial wealth gap is a serious and major obstacle to a racially just society.

One proposal that has received more traction in the United States is entitled the “Child Wealth Building Act.” This proposal, introduced into the Washington, DC, city council, would authorize the creation of trust accounts of up to \$25,000 for babies of descendants of slavery, roughly \$80,000 for a family of four. Upon turning eighteen, the child may withdraw the funds to pursue education, buy a home, start a business.

## 3. Strengthen Community-Based and Black-Owned Financial Institutions

Banking is a major sector of the American economy, and credit markets shape access to capital with the capacity to start businesses, invest in communities, and seed entrepreneurship. Part of the problem is that too many communities of color lack access to traditional credit markets or regular banking services. But another part of the problem is simply lack of ownership and leadership in these institutions.

According to one estimate, there are 4,400 banks with \$20.2 trillion in assets in the United States. The top ten banks earn more than \$1 trillion a year in profits. But only eighteen of those banks are owned by African Americans, and those institutions have only \$4.4 billion in assets, a small fraction of those held by the sector. Since banks make critical decisions about whom to provide credit and tend to contribute to their communities by donating funds. Black-owned banks could have a salutary effect on reducing the racial wealth gap and improving the economies of racially marginalized communities.

Recommendations in the literature, relating to banking institutions, include strengthening these institutions with more resources and expertise, pushing them to waive small and unnecessary fees and barriers to credit, strengthening the Community Reinvestment Act to require banks to meet the needs of marginalized communities, and providing low-interest loans and microloans for businesses and borrowers.

#### 4. Forgive Student Debt

Researchers at the Brookings Institution not only claim that Black college graduates owe \$7,400 more on average than their white peers (\$23,400 versus \$16,000, including nonborrowers in the averages), but that the debt burden grows even larger a few years after graduation. They claim that Black graduates hold nearly \$53,000 in student loan debt four years after graduation—almost twice as much as their white counterparts. The impact of this burden is not just on the racial wealth gap, but student debt is found to slow family formation, homeownership, and entrepreneurship.

Loan forgiveness is a prominent part of many racial-justice and equity policy platforms, from the Movement for Black Lives to the Kerner and Ferguson Commissions reports. Thomas Shapiro, an expert on the racial wealth gap, called for loan forgiveness on all student debt up to \$50,000, a proposal echoed among many other advocates in recent years.

#### 5. Reparations Commission

Several states and localities have adopted programs or initiatives in the name of reparations, including the Evanston and California programs. Although the state of California has created a special task force for this purpose, California's state budget is about \$200 billion a year, but the cost of eliminating the Black-white wealth gap in the state would be three times that amount. The Maryland budget is incapable of raising the funds needed to fully repair the harm of slavery. However, the Reparations Commission would be able to come up with a package to address and repair the harm of slavery within the constraints of the Maryland budget.

The United States has paid reparations to victims of the World War II-era Japanese internment. Germany has paid reparations to Israel and victims of the Holocaust. Not all these reparations policies went directly to victims. More recently, Germany set up a reparations fund for early twentieth-century ethnic cleansing in what is now Namibia. In 2015, Spain even set up a "reparations" policy of granting citizenship to any descendants of Sephardic Jews expelled during the Spanish Inquisition in the fifteenth century.

The State of Maryland has a Black Governor, Speaker, Treasurer and the most diverse legislature in the United States. It is the Randallstown NAACP belief that there should be no issue with the ability, nor will, that the Maryland General Assembly create a Reparations Commission.