

Prince George's County NAACP Branch Fighting To End Money Bail in Maryland

After unsuccessful reform attempts last session, local NAACP branch affirms its commitment to change

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Prince George's County, MD – The Prince George's County NAACP branch has committed to fighting to end Maryland's money bail system in the 2018 legislative session in Annapolis.

Years of attempts at reforming cash bail culminated in a change in court procedure enacted by the Maryland Court of Appeals last year. A new report released by the NAACP shows that while the new court rule drastically changed the way the bail system operates in Maryland, more progress is needed to ensure that bail is used fairly.

Bob Ross, President of the Prince George's County branch said the following about why the branch was so committed to fighting for an end to the money bail system:

"Prince George's County, being a majority minority jurisdiction, is greatly affected by the monetary bail requirement of misdemeanor suspects. Low- and middle-income families typically do not have the resources to bail out accused family members, which results in Marylanders being regularly imprisoned for long stretches of time. In recent years, other states across the country have shown that limiting or abolishing the use of the monetary bail system has been successful and it proves that most people charged are generally a low flight risk erasing the need for the monetary bail system altogether. "

This fall, the Prince George's County branch, along with the Baltimore City NAACP branch, collaborated with public policy graduate students at the Princeton University School of Public and International Affairs. The students spent the semester investigating previous attempts to reform Maryland's bail system and studying successful examples of bail reform from across the country.

Their report, titled "Advancing Bail Reform in Maryland: Progress and Possibilities," also looked at Maryland District Court data to see the impact of the new court rule on bail. Their assessment yielded the conclusion that Maryland legislators must "strengthen implementation of Court Rule 4-216.1 and discourage judges from detaining low-level offenders" while expanding pretrial services across the entire state, creating alternatives to money bail.

These findings affirm the call by the Prince George's County Branch and other advocates that the new court rule is a good first step that must be strengthened by the Maryland legislature.

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For more information or to schedule an interview on this topic please contact the Prince George's County Branch President, Bob Ross, at: (240) 619-5418 OR naacp-umarlboro@comcast.net.