

# 2023 Annual Report





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# Our Mission, Vision, and Values

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## About Us

Established in 1997, the Justice Policy Institute (JPI) is a national research and policy advocacy organization that partners with communities most affected by crime and the criminal legal system to build better safety solutions. Our efforts center on producing forward-thinking research and policy recommendations; engaging in targeted advocacy to change policies and practices; and elevating the work, voices, and stories of people, families, and communities affected by crime and the criminal legal system.

## Mission Statement

Justice Policy Institute is dedicated to reducing the use of incarceration and the justice system by promoting fair and effective policies.

## Vision Statement

Justice Policy Institute envisions a society with safe, equitable and healthy communities just and effective solutions to social problems, and the use of incarceration only as a last resort.

## Values



Honesty

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Equity

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Compassion

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Collaboration

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Disruption

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# JPI in 2023

In 2023, JPI said goodbye to Marc Schindler after nearly a decade of service as JPI's Executive Director as he transitioned to leadership in Maryland's Department of Juvenile Services. For the last nine months of 2023, Paul Ashton served as Interim Executive Director. During that time, JPI's work to change legal systems continued without interruption. For example, we released the first comprehensive look at Maryland's parole system and release decision-making since 1935. This nearly 90-year update provided 10 best practices and has catalyzed several community meetings leading up to the 2024 legislative session. Additionally, we released a short educational video that followed two justice-involved individuals and highlighted the ramifications of childhood trauma and the need to enact reform.

Keep reading to discover more about our impact in 2023!

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# Building the Team

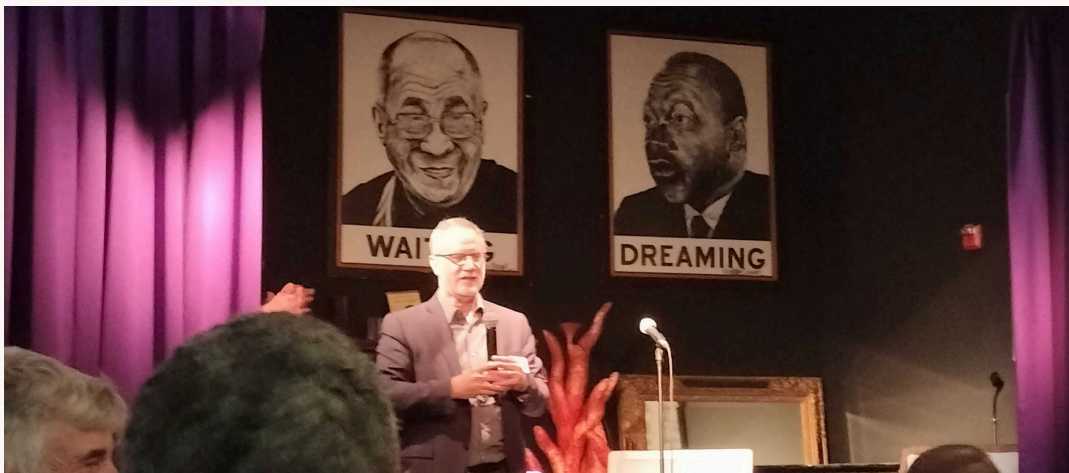


Desmond Barr joined JPI's team as the inaugural Emerging Adult Fellow in October 2023 to support ongoing work focused on reforms to Washington, DC's approach to criminal legal-system-involved emerging adults (18- to 24-year-olds). A 22-year-old District resident, Desmond is a motivated individual, focused on his passion for giving back to his community and advocating for those in need. He also works as a Peer Support Counselor at Independence Now, a non-profit organization that advocates and embodies independence and equality for all people with disabilities. In his free time, Desmond likes to design his car and take it to car shows in his community.

# A Decade Fight for Justice

On May 10, 2023, we officially said goodbye to Marc Schindler and thanked him for his leadership since 2013. The event at the original Busboys and Poets brought together JPI staff, alumni, and friends to commemorate Marc Schindler's influence on both JPI and the youth and criminal legal systems. The event was a celebration of JPI's past, present and future.

Check out a few photos from this event!



# Our Approach



## 1. Responding and Adapting in Real Time

JPI collaborates with organizations, direct service providers, policy makers, and the impacted community to safeguard the integrity of progressive and smart policies from previous years, ensuring they remain intact and preventing the passage of additional carceral legislation. Throughout 2023, this work took on special urgency, as concerns arose in response to the rise in certain violent crimes, prompting rhetorical and policy shifts back to the “tough on crime” era.



## 2. Centering the Knowledge, Experience, and Leadership of People Directly Impacted

Central to JPI’s theory of change has always been centering and uplifting those with lived experience in the movement to reform our youth and criminal legal systems. From building a team with lived experience to collaborating with returning citizens, communities, and those currently incarcerated, JPI believes in the power of authentic partnerships to help root our research and policy portfolio in lived experiences. JPI actively participates in meetings with Lifers for Change and Incarcerated Women in Search of Help, two advocacy groups representing those behind the walls in the Maryland Correctional Institutes in Jessup, Maryland. These “inside out” meetings informed the issues and policy recommendations in our 2023 parole report, *Safe at Home*.



## 3. Creating Connection Among Diverse Stakeholders

For over 25 years, JPI has been at the forefront of addressing emerging justice issues, conducting in-depth research and data analysis to build an evidence base for reducing reliance on the criminal and juvenile legal systems. JPI uses research to serve as a bridge between those impacted by the legal system and policymakers. We help bring their stories and firsthand experience to the table through our research findings, advocacy efforts, and various communication channels.



# 2023 Highlights

In 2023, JPI continued to promote evidence-based policy solutions for our youth and criminal legal systems. Through a unique combination of research, advocacy, and public education, we identified and recommended a number of important reforms to policymakers and other stakeholders in the field.



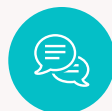
## 1. Research & Publications

JPI conducts in-depth research and data analysis to address emerging justice issues, reducing reliance on the youth and criminal legal systems. For over 25 years, our targeted policy briefs and reports have provided timely data for advocates and policymakers to drive system change.



## 2. Advocacy & Organizing

JPI bridges the gap between individuals impacted by the legal system and policymakers to drive change. We partner directly with those with firsthand experience within the system, including currently incarcerated individuals and their families. Our strategy for change involves not only amplifying their voices, stories, and active participation but also engaging in both direct and indirect legislative advocacy. By serving as a liaison among advocates, policymakers, and our impacted partners, we ensure that their firsthand experiences play a pivotal role in shaping and guiding our endeavors.

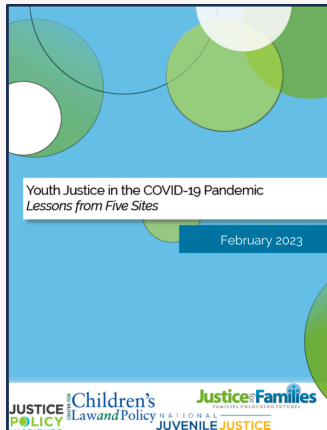


## 3. Public Education & Media

JPI delivers concise, accurate, and impactful information to bolster effective legal reforms. Leveraging our in-house expertise, we amplify reform stories through op-eds, articles, press releases, and various communication channels. Central to our mission is the commitment to uplifting and empowering the voices of those directly impacted by the legal system and their families, and community members.

# Research & Publications Highlights

To read the full report, click the report cover image

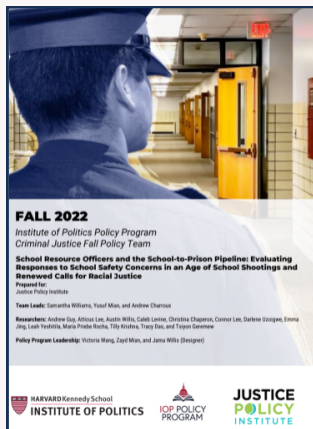


## Youth Justice in COVID-19 Pandemic: Lessons From Five Sites

January 30, 2023

The COVID-19 pandemic triggered an unprecedented public health crisis that profoundly impacted the administration of youth justice. Due to the heightened health risk posed by the virus to young people incarcerated in corrections facilities, as well as the staff working with them, states and localities were compelled to swiftly reduce the number of youths held in congregate care facilities and implement strategies to prevent and contain the virus's spread.

Our research demonstrated that significant reductions in youth incarceration are attainable, underscoring the possibility of supporting and holding a larger number of justice-involved young people accountable within their homes and communities. JPI, along with three other advocacy organizations, provided case studies and lessons learned from five sites.



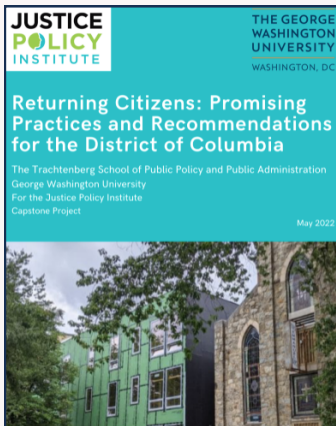
## School Resource Officers and the School-to-Prison Pipeline: Evaluating Responses to School Safety Concerns in an Age of School Shootings and Renewed Calls for Racial Justice

March 27, 2023

JPI partnered with the Policy Program at the Harvard Kennedy School's Institute of Politics to conduct a comprehensive examination of the impact of police officers in schools. The resulting report provides a thorough review of existing research on the role of police in maintaining school safety, incorporates interviews with relevant stakeholders, and

proposes recommendations for addressing the harmful effects associated with School Resource Officers (SROs). In the research we provided three recommendations:

1. Expand Memoranda of Understanding to standardize trainings and tightly prescribe the roles and responsibilities for SROs;
2. Reinvest funding from SROs to restorative justice programs and other non-disciplinary alternatives; and
3. When implementing change, we need to recognize the harms contributed by punitive measures in schools.



## Returning Citizens: Promising Practices and Recommendations for the District of Columbia

March 27, 2023

JPI collaborated with graduate students from George Washington University’s Trachtenberg School of Public Policy & Public Administration to research the landscape of transitional housing for individuals returning home after extended prison terms. The resulting report presented the team's research and findings, which encompass challenges encountered during reentry, identification of best practices in transitional housing, and recommendations advocating for a holistic community approach to support the transition from prison to society. Washington, DC leaders can take action to improve reentry services, and this report provides several actionable recommendations to make the journey home more accessible and sustainable. We offered three core recommendations:

1. Emphasize inter-agency collaboration;
2. Offer mentoring services to returning citizens to encourage successful reentry; and
3. Reentry programs must take a holistic approach that accounts for the diverse needs of returning citizens and the sentence length individuals received.



## Safe at Home: Improving Maryland’s Parole Release Decision Making

May 23, 2023

The Maryland Parole Commission (MPC) suffers from a series of systemic problems that result in the parole system’s inability to conduct its duties effectively. Many individuals remain in prison long past any meaningful public safety benefit, at substantial cost to individuals, families, communities, and Maryland taxpayers. It had been nearly 100 years since the previous comprehensive review of Maryland’s parole practices. JPI accessed data reflected practices by MPC between 2017 and 2021. Additionally, JPI conducted a comprehensive analysis of national parole practices and identified 10 best practices for Maryland to improve its practices. Below are a few examples of best practices in parole release decision-making:

1. Parole release decisions should be based solely on objective factors related to an individual’s future risk to the community; punishment, as a goal, should be considered met at the time of initial parole eligibility;
2. The board should coordinate closely with other criminal legal and support agencies to ensure the development of a parole release plan that supports successful reentry; and
3. Establish inclusive standards for parole board member eligibility, including education and work/life experience.





## **Don't Abandon Us: Addressing Youth, Crime, and Trauma (Film & Policy Brief)**

October 3, 2023

“Don't Abandon Us” sheds light on the lived experiences of two individuals who served lengthy prison sentences during childhood. This 14-minute film serves as a poignant reminder of the critical need for effective public safety strategies that recognize and confront the early traumas affecting numerous young people who intersect with the criminal legal system, further underscoring that any successful public safety strategy must incorporate measures to identify and address these underlying traumas. Extensive research spanning decades reveals that Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) encompassing early exposure to traumatic experiences significantly correlate with heightened risks of serious, persistent, and chronic criminal behavior during adolescence and beyond. Complementing the film is an accompanying brief offering additional context, research insights, and recommendations concerning ACEs. These resources aim to propel juvenile legal system reform efforts focused on trauma-informed approaches, fostering healing among young individuals and empowering communities.



## **Missed Opportunities: Why inaction on Preventative Measures Undermines Public Safety in Washington, DC**

December 13, 2023

A nearly decade-long failure of the Bowser Administration to fund and implement evidence-based strategies to prevent violence and strengthen communities has fueled the context for increased crime and violence. “Missed Opportunities” uncovers a lack of leadership on proactive public safety strategies, instability in key executive agencies, and little coordination of efforts by government officials, all of which have left the District ill-prepared to respond to increases in crime. The brief offers a series of recommendations for District leadership:

1. Improve the coordination between agencies working to prevent and address violent crime;
2. Focus comprehensive resources on the specific people at the center of violence;
3. Implement a holistic public health approach to violence prevention and intervention and invest in supports and services in communities;
4. Fund efforts to build community trust and efficacy in policing; and
5. Evaluate and sustain effective programs and initiatives.

# Advocacy & Organizing



## 1. Urging Comprehensive Parole Reform in Maryland

JPI continued to build on its efforts to reform parole by examining Maryland's parole system, which had not been comprehensively reviewed since 1935. In May 2023, JPI released *Safe at Home*. Our strategic partnership with Maryland's Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services granted us access to parole outcome data, to ground best practices with the current issues plaguing the system. Further, The Lifers for Change and Incarcerated Women in Search of Help advocacy groups, representing lifers behind the walls in the Maryland Correctional Institute in Jessup, Maryland, were core partners in the development of *Safe At Home*. These inside collaborative meetings were crucial in grounding our research in lived experiences.

Additionally, JPI received an invitation to the Maryland Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee to present the findings of the new report. JPI coordinated with our lived experience partners to prepare the Senate committee. This marked a significant opportunity, as it was the first briefing of the 2023 General Assembly, enabling JPI to position parole reform as a legislative priority.

JPI communicated the report findings directly to the public by hosting a series of education community discussions. The first community event was a partnership with No Struggle, No Success, one of the state's top reentry programs, and with Marian House, a transitional housing program for returning women. We hosted additional community events in Montgomery County with the Women's Democratic Club of Montgomery County, and in Prince George's County with Life After Release. These discussions aimed to use our parole report to educate and engage various audiences, building support before the 2024 legislative session. Special guests for the event included the Chair of the Senate Judiciary Committee, the Vice Chair of the Senate Judiciary Committee, the Chair of the Legislative Black Caucus, and various other Maryland state delegates.

JPI also worked to improve the process of compassionate release, and after several meetings, JPI was able to convince the Maryland Parole Commission to move away from the use of the Karnofsky tool - a standard measure for assessing the ability of cancer patients to perform ordinary tasks - as a medical parole decision-making tool and toward a more holistic approach to medical parole decision-making. The push to eliminate the use of the Karnofsky score was a hurdle for the MPC in supporting compassionate release reform legislation, as they heavily relied on it for medical parole decisions. JPI's efforts not only successfully addressed this obstacle but also established a valuable relationship with the MPC, contributing significantly to MPC's decision to support the legislation.

**Key Partners:** Willie Hamilton, Etta Myers, Stanley Mitchell, Gwendolyn Levi, University of Maryland Law School, Maryland Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services.



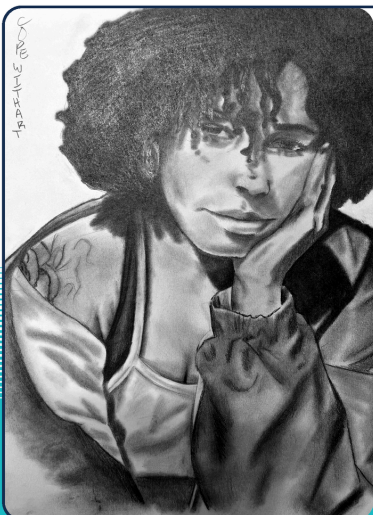
# 2. Supporting Emerging Adults in the District of Columbia

JPI has a rich history working on emerging adults issues. In 2016, JPI convened close to four dozen people from ten states in two structured focus groups on the East and West Coasts to discuss the opportunities and the challenges to developing a better approach to meeting the needs of system-involved 18- to 24-year-olds – *Improving Approaches to Serving Young Adults in the Justice System*. Building on this work, JPI developed the *Youth Rehabilitation Act Emerging Adult Strategic Plan* for Washington, DC to better support emerging adults, and released a report, *DC’s Young Men Emerging Unit: A story of reform and lessons learned from the front lines*, highlighting the success and lessons learned.

In 2023, JPI, in partnership with Free Minds Book Club and DC’s Thrive Under 25 Coalition, were selected to represent DC as an innovation site for Columbia University’s Emerging Adult Justice Project to field test and refine their developmental framework focused specifically on achieving positive outcomes for emerging adults. As part of this work, JPI hired the inaugural Emerging Adult Fellow, Desmond Barr, who elevates our work from a lived experience perspective. Desmond was integral in the deployment of our November release of five different emerging adult personas – an individualized representation of one segment of DC’s legal-impacted emerging adults. These [personas highlight](#) the aggregate lived experience of emerging adults and their sense of safety, belonging, identity & values, competency and contributions, and provide valuable insight into the lived experiences of DC’s emerging adult population for policymakers and practitioners.

To wrap up a productive year of supporting work related to emerging adults in DC, JPI testified in support of The Whole Government Response to Crime Act of 2023, which included the creation of a Director of Emerging Adult Services. Desmond Barr testified at a Joint Oversight Roundtable on Public Safety and Behavioral Health Services and Support for Youth. JPI will continue to support emerging adult work in 2024.

**Key Partners:** Ovid Gabriel, StrategyForward Advisors, returning partners, advocacy organizations, government partners.



### Hope

20 yrs old, Afro Latina

**GOALS**  
Have a permanent job with benefits. Buy a house in a better neighborhood. Give child access to a better school. Own a business.

**PRIORITIES**  
Time with family and community. Safety, stability. Future opportunities for child.

**STRENGTHS & SKILLS**  
Great mother and sister. Excellent worker, self-starter, strong financial literacy and budgeting skills. Natural leader and creative.

**EDUCATION & CAREER**  
Graduated high school, has worked in a daycare for two years.

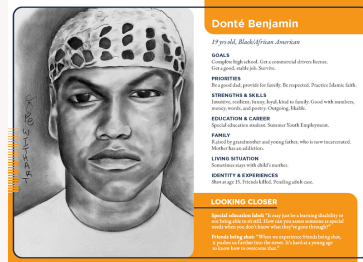
**FAMILY**  
Has a child and a 12-year-old brother.

**LIVING SITUATION**  
Apartment in Shaw (where partner grew up).

**IDENTITY & EXPERIENCES**  
Struggles to find and pay for childcare for child while working full-time. Arrested and diverted two years ago.

### LOOKING CLOSER

**Being a young mom:** “Mothers want to give their kids the life they didn’t have. They want kids to have stability.”  
**Not having parents of her own:** “Without having parents, how do we as young parents know how to conduct ourselves?”



### Donté Benjamin

19 yrs old, Black/Guyanese American

**GOALS**  
Complete high school. Get a commercial driver license. Travel the world with his brother.

**PRIORITIES**  
Protect his partner for good. Be employed. Protect himself with money, food, and safety. Changing habits.

**STRENGTHS & SKILLS**  
Personable, confident, funny, kind, hard worker. Good work ethic. Money smart, and person. Changing habits.

**EDUCATION & CAREER**  
Specialized in cosmetology. Started Truck Employment.

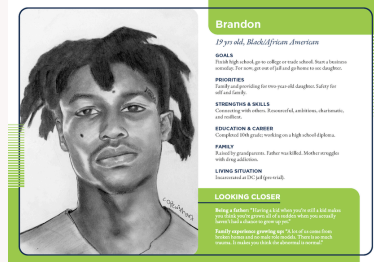
**FAMILY**  
Loves his grandmother and young ladies. Who are incarcerated.

**LIVING SITUATION**  
Apartment in Columbia Heights.

**IDENTITY & EXPERIENCES**  
Been in jail for 10 months.

### LOOKING CLOSER

**Specialized in cosmetology:** “The only way to becoming flexible to work in the DC area is to get your cosmetology license.”  
**Being a young man:** “When you experience things, you have to be able to handle them. You have to be strong. You have to be able to handle them.”



### Brandon

19 yrs old, Black/Guyanese American

**GOALS**  
Finish high school. Get a job or start a business. Travel the world. Get a car and a house.

**PRIORITIES**  
Finish high school. Get a job or start a business. Travel the world. Get a car and a house.

**STRENGTHS & SKILLS**  
Creative, confident, hard worker, good work ethic, and resilient.

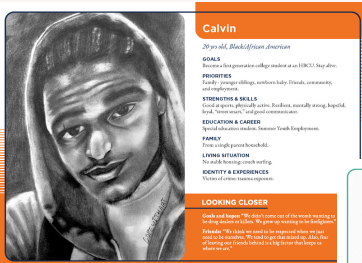
**EDUCATION & CAREER**  
Completed 10th grade. Working on a high school diploma.

**FAMILY**  
Loves his grandmother. Father was killed. Mother works with his children.

**LIVING SITUATION**  
Apartment in Columbia Heights.

### LOOKING CLOSER

**Being a young man:** “The only way to becoming flexible to work in the DC area is to get your cosmetology license.”  
**Family experience:** “When you experience things, you have to be able to handle them. You have to be strong. You have to be able to handle them.”



### Calvin

20 yrs old, Black/Guyanese American

**GOALS**  
Finish high school. Get a job or start a business. Travel the world. Get a car and a house.

**PRIORITIES**  
Finish high school. Get a job or start a business. Travel the world. Get a car and a house.

**STRENGTHS & SKILLS**  
Creative, confident, hard worker, good work ethic, and resilient.

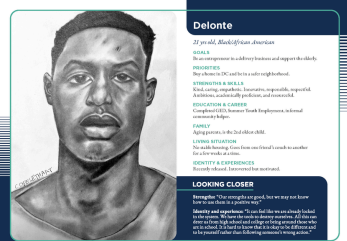
**EDUCATION & CAREER**  
Completed 10th grade. Working on a high school diploma.

**FAMILY**  
Loves his grandmother. Father was killed. Mother works with his children.

**LIVING SITUATION**  
Apartment in Columbia Heights.

### LOOKING CLOSER

**Goal and hope:** “The only way to becoming flexible to work in the DC area is to get your cosmetology license.”  
**Family:** “When you experience things, you have to be able to handle them. You have to be strong. You have to be able to handle them.”



### Delonte

21 yrs old, Black/Guyanese American

**GOALS**  
Finish high school. Get a job or start a business. Travel the world. Get a car and a house.

**PRIORITIES**  
Finish high school. Get a job or start a business. Travel the world. Get a car and a house.

**STRENGTHS & SKILLS**  
Creative, confident, hard worker, good work ethic, and resilient.

**EDUCATION & CAREER**  
Completed 10th grade. Working on a high school diploma.

**FAMILY**  
Loves his grandmother. Father was killed. Mother works with his children.

**LIVING SITUATION**  
Apartment in Columbia Heights.

### LOOKING CLOSER

**Being a young man:** “The only way to becoming flexible to work in the DC area is to get your cosmetology license.”  
**Family experience:** “When you experience things, you have to be able to handle them. You have to be strong. You have to be able to handle them.”

## Facilitation Questions:

1. Hope feels that she is surviving, not thriving. How can Hope and others like her better connect to available resources to achieve a greater sense of stability and support?
2. Hope has marketable skills and aspirations to be more. How might Hope and others like her build on existing skills, strengths, and achievements to achieve career goals?
3. How might resources, such as mentorship, career and education pathways, childcare, and support from a peer network, enable Hope and others like her to go from surviving to thriving? Are there other resources that can better enable Hope to achieve her dreams?

### ABOUT:

This persona represents one segment of DC’s justice-impacted emerging adults. Personas were developed collectively at the Understanding Lived Experience, DC Emerging Adult Justice event in 2023 by local justice policy, advocacy, and community leaders, as well as local District government and agency representatives. Personas were based on data and interviews with DC’s emerging adults and validated by the Young Men Emerging unit at the DC jail. Art by Ovid Gabriel of copewithart LLC. Personas prepared by StrategyForward Advisors, with support from Thrive Under 25 coalition.

### HOW TO USE:

This persona is a resource to better understand our justice-impacted emerging adults. Use this persona to center these young people in all policy and practice decisions and actions. Come back to this persona when figuring out how to address challenges and overcome issues. Ask what this individual needs to thrive, build on their strengths, and achieve their goals, and what we can do to better support them.

LEARN MORE

[JUSTICEPOLICY.ORG/PERSONAS](https://JUSTICEPOLICY.ORG/PERSONAS)

JUSTICE POLICY INSTITUTE







### 3. Defending and Expanding Second Look

JPI has been actively involved in second look reforms and implementation since 2019. JPI coordinates the implementation of DC's Incarceration Reduction Amendment Act (IRAA). IRAA was passed in 2016 and was amended in 2019 and again in 2021. The law now permits individuals who committed their offense before turning 25 years old and have served at least 15 years in incarceration to petition the court for a review and potential sentence reduction. By the end of 2023, nearly 200 people were released pursuant to IRAA. JPI worked tirelessly with community and legal partners to ensure a smooth and successful transition home, convening monthly community conversations and quarterly reentry coordinating councils to alleviate challenges of reentry.

Despite the overwhelming success of IRAA, most notably the less than 4 percent recidivism rate, it has been targeted for repeal or reduction. JPI and other organizations coordinated testimony where IRAA recipients shared their perspective on the importance of second look. James Carpenter, who now serves as a community mentor after being granted release pursuant to IRAA, testified:

*"Here is what a typical week looks like for me. I arrive at a junior high school in Ward 8. I have a caseload of 4-5 students who have been identified to have disciplinary or attendance problems. I am tasked with mentoring these youths, showing them that someone cares about them and their future. [...] three times a week I drive to lower Maryland (New Beginnings) where I met with incarcerated youths."*

**Key Partners:** Returning partners, Thrive Under 25 Coalition, Changing Perceptions, Second Look Project, Network for Victim Recovery DC, Free Minds Book Club & Writing Workshop, community members.



### 4. Building Better Responses to Youth Justice

JPI kicked off the year by releasing *Youth Justice in the COVID-19 Pandemic*, a series of lessons learned from five sites: Texas, Maryland, New York, Pierce County (state of Washington), and Utah. The diversity of jurisdictions provides a useful tool to advocates across the country to advance youth decarceration strategies. JPI also released a 14-minute film and brief on the impact of youth trauma and how public safety measures must recognize and identify strategies to address the long-term impacts of ACEs. In December, we hosted a virtual screening, in partnership with the Maryland Youth Justice Coalition, which included a panel discussion with a representative from Maryland's Department of Juvenile Services and one of the film's focuses, Alonza Turner-Bey.

JPI, alongside the Center for Juvenile Justice Reform at Georgetown University, hosted a two-day in-person convening as part of a learning community for child welfare and juvenile justice agency public information officers (PIOs). The event provided the PIOs with opportunities for peer-to-peer learning, as well as sessions on effective communications and messaging strategies.

**Key Partners:** Center for Children's Law and Policy, Georgetown University's Center for Juvenile Justice Reform, Justice for Families, National Juvenile Justice Network, impacted community members.



## 5. Improving Responses to Crime Survivors

JPI has been actively working to improve the outcomes for crime survivors, understanding that the criminal legal system fails all parties, including those impacted by crime. In 2022, we hosted a series of community conversations in Baltimore to hear directly from firearm crime survivors, many of whom never received appropriate care. The community conversations were invaluable in confirming the need for legislation to remove barriers to accessing these resources and better align access with lived experience.

JPI worked with advocates and partners in the Maryland General Assembly to develop a legislative remedy. In 2023, we worked with leadership to improve the compensation process in Maryland. Criminal injuries compensation boards (CICBs) are designed to provide compensation to survivors of violent crime. Each state has a victim's compensation board, but Maryland ranks almost last in the country in its compensation grant rate. Due to eligibility standards, many of Maryland's most impacted survivors are denied access to CICB resources. Maryland's CICB eligibility standards have implicit bias and disparities in practice, as Black male gunshot victims in areas like Baltimore City and Prince George's County are not receiving compensation at the same rate as other survivors. One of the reasons for this disparity is that reporting to law enforcement within 48 hours is required to receive resources from CICB. Given the relationship between Black youth and law enforcement, the 48-hour rule is a barrier. In 2024, Governor Moore adopted the bill.

Additionally, in Washington, DC, At-large councilmember Robert White introduced a bill creating a full-time victim service coordinator position. JPI engaged in direct advocacy to emphasize the need for better government coordination prior to the introduction of legislation titled "Whole Government Response to Crime Act of 2023."

**Key Partners:** Governor Moore's administration, returning partners, advocates, advocacy organizations, allied members of the victim's community.



## 6. Advancing Public Safety and Pushing Back on "Tough on Crime" Policies

In 2023, JPI continued efforts on responding to the various crime bills. Many of the proposed changes aimed to dismantle recent policy reforms and turn back the clock on the criminal legal system. In May, JPI led the efforts of nearly 200 individuals to reject the proposed changes to the Incarceration Reduction Amendment Act (IRAA). In the end, the proposed changes to IRAA failed. Additionally, JPI testified against the "Addressing Crime through Targeted Intervention and Violence Enforcement (ACTIVE) Act of 2023." Our testimony detailed our concern for certain aspects of the ACTIVE bill, such as the unprovoked search and seizure of any person convicted of a gun offense who is on probation, supervised release, or parole, and the expansion of pre-trial detention.

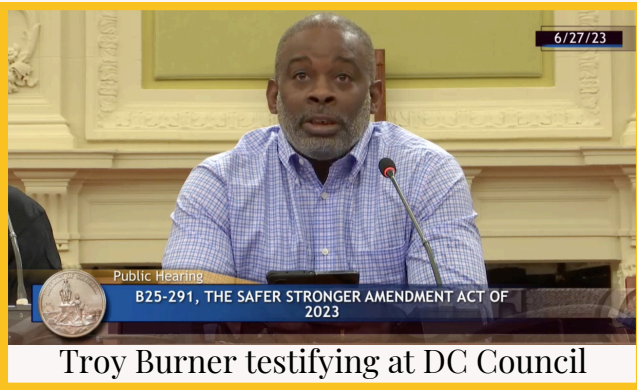
During the 2023 legislative session in Maryland, Baltimore City's State's Attorney proposed a gun-enhancement bill which would increase the automatic sentence to five-years for illegally carrying a handgun. JPI and other partner organizations worked together to kill the bill.

Our efforts to prevent harmful policies from being enacted will continue in 2024 through our strategic research communication and advocacy efforts.

**Key Partners:** Returning partners, Thrive Under 25 Coalition, direct-service providers, community members.



# Advocacy in Action!



Troy Burner testifying at DC Council



Paul Ashton and Desmond Barr after a day of testifying at DC Council



T. Shekhinah Braveheart presenting at FAMM's Second Chance Working Group Conference



Desmond Barr with fellow emerging adults and credible messengers following a session on implementation of the Youth Rehabilitation Act Strategic Plan



Keith Wallington, T. Shekhinah Braveheart, Ryan King, Troy Burner, and Marc Schindler in Annapolis after a day of hearings



Keith Wallington and T. Shekhinah Braveheart at a parole education event with guest State Senator Will Smith



Paul Ashton and Desmond Barr at the Youth Justice Convening with Annie E. Casey Foundation in Houston



# Public Education & Media

To read the full article, click the news outlet logo



**T. Shekhinah Braveheart ( JPI Advocacy Associate )**

*“Maryland’s Parole System Is Failing Us - And Has Been for a Long Time,”*

September 7, 2023

“Maryland leaders wanting to address community concerns about rising crime should reform the state’s parole system. For too long, instead of providing incentives for good behavior and rehabilitation that would make our neighborhoods safer, Maryland parole has been associated with hopelessness and recidivism. Comprehensive parole reform, combined with more robust support to help released citizens succeed in the community, could help fix this.”



**PBS News Hour**

*“Senate moves to override controversial crime law in nation’s capital”*

March 8, 2023

Troy Burner (JPI Associate) joined PBS News Hour to share the importance of the DC Criminal Code Reform legislation. During the conversation, he shared his powerful personal story on how the antiquated criminal code directly impacted his wrongful conviction and subsequent incarceration for nearly 25 years. While the RCCA was ultimately overturned in Congress, Troy moved the needle for future efforts of reform.



## JPI helping our impacted partners have a voice in the media



**Willie Hamilton ( Impacted Partner )**

*“I know personally that parole is a privilege; I also know Maryland’s system is broken”* June 19, 2023

“I went to prison 31 years ago for serious violent crime committed when I was 16 years old. During my incarceration, I followed the rules, avoided trouble and participated in nearly every workshop, course, and program that was offered. Yet, when I went up for parole after serving 20 years, the Maryland Parole Commission members showed no interest in my personal growth or how much I had changed. Parole is a privilege, but the process is broken.”

Be sure to read our blogs covering a variety of topics, including *Juneteenth* and *Wrongful Conviction Day!*





# Cited and Quoted

Throughout 2023, JPI's research garnered citations across numerous media platforms, with staff members frequently sought out and quoted as subject-matter experts.



## Select Quotes from JPI Staff

Paul Ashton talked with **Government Technology** to weigh in on school resource officer programs: *“In those jurisdictions that did take steps to remove SROs, we did not see the necessary investment in school counselors and other support services for youth.”*

Keith Wallington was highlighted by **The Washington Post** and spoke about the Maryland Equitable Justice Collaborative: *“For years and years and years [we’ve been] talking about the problems, about the root causes, but we’ve never really had someone to pivot us to a different direction. There’s never been a long-term effort with someone saying, ‘we didn’t get here overnight and we’re not going to get out of this overnight.’ There’s never been a pivoting of the ship, and now I feel like that can happen.”*

# Looking Ahead: JPI in 2024

JPI is excited to build on the progress made in the previous years. We intend to:

- Support comprehensive parole reform during Maryland's legislative session.
- Release an interactive website updating our 2015 report, *The Right Investment*, that reviews neighborhood-level indicators in Baltimore City and overlays them with the current prison population.
- Continue the implementation support of Washington DC's Incarceration Reduction Amendment Act of 2016, and the Second Look Amendment Act of 2021.
- Expand internal capacity to further our mission to reform our youth and adult criminal legal systems.
- Focus on organizational transition, including the hiring of a new Executive Director, to forge the path forward.
- Continue our partnerships with the impacted community, ensuring that all policy proposals and research are informed by those closest to the problem.

# Acknowledgements

## STAFF, FELLOWS AND BOARD

JPI Staff: Paul Ashton, T. Shekhinah Braveheart, Troy Burner, Ryan King, Jeremy Kittredge, Sadie Rose-Stern, Marc Schindler, Seaira Wainaina, and Keith Wallington.

JPI Fellows: Mai Fernandez, Desmond Barr, Joel Castón.

JPI Board of Directors: Katharine Huffman (chair), Marcus Bullock, Albert Gore III, Angela Modrick (treasurer), Noah Pizmony-Levy Drezner, Michael Satin, and Bobby Vassar.

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# JUSTICE POLICY INSTITUTE

Justice Policy Institute is dedicated to reducing the use of incarceration and the justice system by promoting fair and effective policies.

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