

FOR THE SAFETY OF OUR COMMUNITY



WELCOME TO THE FIRST ISSUE OF THE COURTWATCH PG NEWSLETTER

This is a quarterly publication dedicated to informing our communities, volunteers and the general public what happens in the courtrooms and how it effects them. Our goal is to share our progress, events, new bills and laws, and related current events - and we do this ALL for the safety of the community.

Thanks for joining us on this journey! We hope you enjoy this issue and look forward to hearing your feedback.



COURTWATCH PG



Dr. Carmen Johnson
*Executive Director of Courtwatch and
Judicial Accountability*

Nothing Happens Without
You!
Join us!



HELLO AND WELCOME! I AM THRILLED TO BE THE CHAIR OF THIS QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER, A PUBLICATION DEDICATED TO COURTWATCH PG AND RELATED ITEMS. AS YOUR CHAIRPERSON, MY GOAL IS TO GATHER AND SHARE THE PROGRESS, EVENTS, RELATED STORIES OF IMPACT, AND MANY OTHER RELATED ITEMS THAT ARE IMPORTANT FOR THE SAFETY OF OUR COMMUNITIES . I'M THRILLED TO EMBARK ON THIS JOURNEY WITH YOU. THANK YOU FOR JOINING US, AND I LOOK FORWARD TO YOUR FEEDBACK AND CONTRIBUTIONS TO FUTURE ISSUES. HEATHER LEWIS CHAIRPERSON, COURTWATCH PG NEWSLETTER

Discover the empowering world of courtwatch!

Join us for a rewarding experience where your time can truly make a difference. Dive into a bit of study about how hearings work, then enjoy a few afternoons of hands-on practice guided by experienced courtwatchers. It's an opportunity to engage with the justice system firsthand, contributing to transparency and fairness. If courtwatching isn't for you, fear not! We offer a variety of other projects where you can also make a meaningful impact. Join us today and be a part of positive change.



we need your help

We are looking for dedicated individuals to join us in our mission to make a positive impact in our community!

Register to join us on any Wednesday at 11:00am EST for orientation!

▶ Not available on that day or at that time? No worries! Just send us an email with a few days and times that you are available to do an orientation

Join our team!

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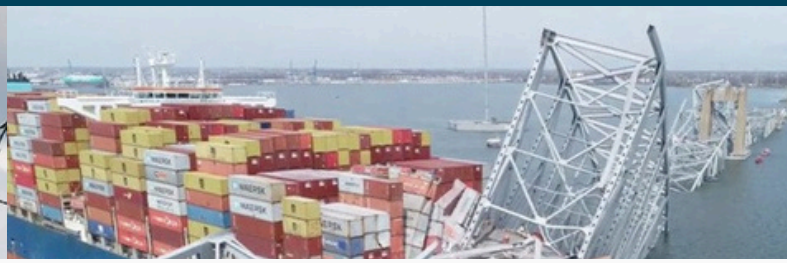
WORDS FROM OUR FOUNDER

WHEN I STARTED COURT WATCH PG, I NEVER IMAGINED IT WOULD BECOME A MODEL FOR WHAT COURT WATCH ORGANIZATIONS SHOULD ASPIRE TO BE. THIS ACHIEVEMENT COULD NOT HAVE BEEN POSSIBLE WITHOUT THE DEDICATION OF MY TEAM, INCLUDING THE DIRECTOR OF COURT WATCH & JUDICIAL ACCOUNTABILITY, DR. CARMEN JOHNSON, AND OUR INCREDIBLE VOLUNTEERS—RANGING FROM 12TH GRADERS, LAW STUDENTS, PROFESSIONALS AND RETIREES. I AM DEEPLY GRATEFUL TO EVERYONE WHO HAS CONTRIBUTED TO ADVANCING MY VISION OF A JUST AND FAIR LEGAL SYSTEM. THANK YOU ALL FOR ENHANCING AND REALIZING THIS DREAM.

Qiana Johnson

QIANA JOHNSON
FOUNDER AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, LIFE
AFTER RELEASE
CO-CONDUCTOR, HARRIET'S WILDEST
DREAMS





Imagine a facility that combines the security of a jail with the care of a hospital and treatment center. Does it sound too good to be true?

The Baltimore 854 bed hybrid jail, hospital, and mental health and substance use treatment facility for people facing criminal charges is aiming to be complete in 2029. Once completed, operating costs are estimated at \$100 Million per year. Nine years ago the old Baltimore city Detention Center was closed. This "Hybrid Jail" will serve the pretrial jail population - it will cost a lot to build and a lot to maintain. I am not a resident of Baltimore. I am all for rehabilitation but this seems too late in the process to be of any help. The cost is also staggering, especially after the recent shipping accident and destruction of Key bridge in Baltimore. We have seen that jail and prison have consistently high recidivism rates, %70 of freed inmates will be arrested again within 5 years. (see article on the U.S. Prison Population Vs. the World).

This is not the best use of \$1 Billion dollars. We need to collectively address issues of agency, equity and the ever expanding poverty in the U.S. This project feels like an empty gesture. A distraction. A shiny "more jobs" election-year action. For the safety of our communities, I urge all of us to think in a broader way, to get at the root of the issues this jail is trying to solve; addiction, mental health and recidivism. Address the core issues in the foundation, not patch leaks in the hose.

I WOULD LIKE TO HEAR WHAT YOU THINK CAN BE DONE TO CORRECT THE ISSUE OF CRIME, ADDICTION IN THIS COUNTRY. YOU CAN RESPOND DIRECTLY TO ME AT DAMPOET@GMAIL.COM.

read more:

BALTIMORE' NEW \$1 BILLION JAIL WILL BE MOST EXPENSIVE STATE-FUNDED PROJECT IN HISTORY

U.S. PRISON POPULATION VS. THE WORLD REPLACING THE KEY BRIDGE COULD COST \$2 BILLION

Listen to more on this topic (and others) on our National Courtwatch News Podcast

Where the pulse of justice beats strong and stories of impact resonate across our nation's courtrooms. Whether you're a legal enthusiast, a concerned citizen, or simply curious about the stories unfolding in courtrooms across the country, the National Courtwatch News Podcast invites you to listen, learn, and engage with the issues that shape our society's moral compass.

[LISTEN HERE](#)

NATIONAL COURTWATCH NEWS

topic: **BALTIMORE'S NEW \$1 BILLION JAIL**

WITH

DR. CARMEN JOHNSON **DR. AUTUMN REDCROSS**

WATCH US ON SPOTIFY/YOUTUBE



Legislation Tracker

STAY UP TO DATE ON BILLS THAT WE HAVE WROTE, COWROTE, OR ARE SUPPORTING



HB565 AND SB0036 - INCUSTODY DEATHS - SIGNED INTO LAW BY GOVERNOR ON 05/16/2024

REQUIRING THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE POLICE, ON OR BEFORE DECEMBER 31 EACH YEAR, TO POST ON ITS WEBSITE AND SUBMIT TO THE GOVERNOR AND THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY A REPORT DETAILING, FOR THE PRECEEDING CALENDAR YEAR, THE NUMBER OF INVESTIGATIONS COMPLETED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF DEATHS OF INCARCERATED INDIVIDUALS SUSPECTED TO BE HOMICIDES THAT OCCUR WHILE THE INCARCERATED INDIVIDUALS ARE IN THE CUSTODY OF THE DIVISION OF CORRECTION AND THE NUMBER OF CASES REFERRED TO THE DEPARTMENT FOR PROSECUTION FOLLOWING AN INVESTIGATION.

HB297 AND SB134 - CORRECTIONAL OMBUDSMAN - SIGNED INTO LAW BY GOVERNOR ON 05/16/2024

ESTABLISHING THE OFFICE OF THE CORRECTIONAL OMBUDSMAN; AUTHORIZING THE JUSTICE REINVESTMENT OVERSIGHT BOARD TO MAKE A RECOMMENDATION FOR THE DISTRIBUTION OF MONEY FROM THE PERFORMANCE INCENTIVE GRANT FUND TO THE OFFICE; REQUIRING THE OFFICE TO CONDUCT INVESTIGATIONS, REVIEWS, AND ASSESSMENTS OF ADMINISTRATIVE ACTS TAKEN BY THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY AND CORRECTIONAL SERVICES, BY THE DEPARTMENT OF JUVENILE SERVICES, OR IN RELATION TO INDIVIDUALS CONFINED BY EITHER DEPARTMENT; PROVIDING FOR THE CONFIDENTIALITY OF CERTAIN COMMUNICATIONS; ETC.

HB1037 - TASK FORCE BILL - SIGNED INTO LAW BY GOVERNOR ON 05/16/2024

ESTABLISHING THE TASK FORCE ON THE CREATION OF A DIVISION OF RETURNING CITIZENS AND EXPANDED REENTRY SERVICES TO IDENTIFY REENTRY SERVICES IN THE STATE, DEVELOP A PLAN TO ESTABLISH A NEW DIVISION WITHIN THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY AND CORRECTIONAL SERVICES, AND DEVELOP A PLAN TO EXPAND CERTAIN SERVICES FOR INDIVIDUALS AFTER RELEASE FROM INCARCERATION; AND REQUIRING THE TASK FORCE TO SUBMIT A REPORT OF ITS FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON OR BEFORE DECEMBER 31, 2025.



WE THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS TO COURTWATCH PG. WE EXPRESS OUR DEEPEST GRATITUDE FOR YOUR UNWAVERING COMMITMENT TO UPHOLDING JUSTICE AND ACCOUNTABILITY WITHIN OUR COURTS. YOUR DEDICATION, PASSION, AND TIRELESS EFFORTS HAVE MADE A PROFOUND IMPACT ON OUR MISSION. THOUGH YOU MAY BE LEAVING OUR TEAM, YOUR LEGACY OF INTEGRITY AND SERVICE WILL CONTINUE TO INSPIRE US. THANK YOU, JANET, FOR YOUR INVALUABLE CONTRIBUTIONS. YOU WILL BE SINCERELY MISSED.



A sliver of humanity goes a long way

Within the hallowed halls of justice, where the weight of decisions can shape destinies, we meticulously record every moment of our Courtwatching endeavors. Among our dedicated Courtwatchers, there was one who witnessed an act of kindness, small yet profound, within the courtroom.

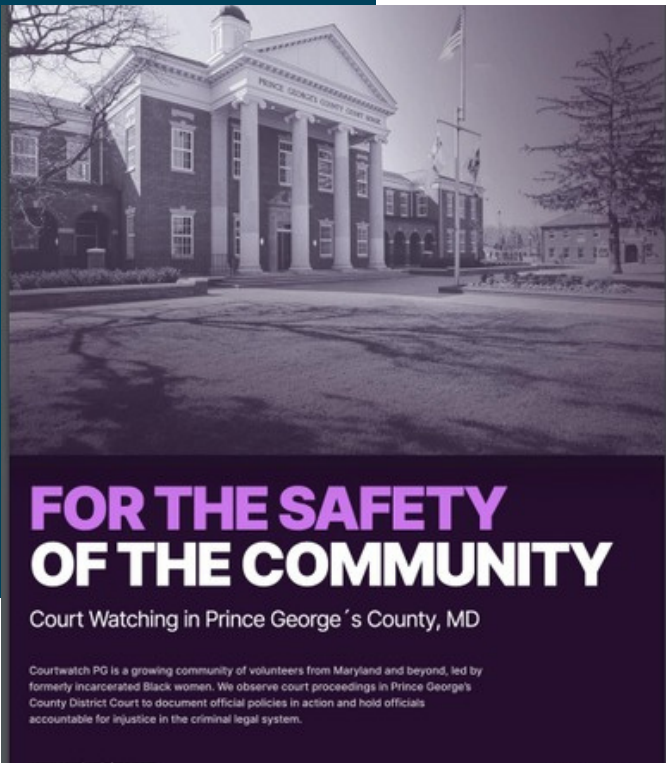
"The Judge," they recounted, "did a very simple but kind and considerate thing. On this case, and on one other where a loved one was referred to mental health court, a diagnosis was sought. Recognizing the sensitivity of the matter, the Judge inquired if the loved one had a diagnosis. And then, in a gesture of empathy, he performed a small act that spoke volumes—he turned off the microphone when the diagnosis was reported. In that moment, he shielded the privacy of those involved, ensuring that no one on the call or anyone who might later peruse the transcript would inadvertently hear the sensitive information."

In this seemingly mundane courtroom exchange, there existed a nugget of humanity—a reminder that behind the legal jargon and procedural formalities, there are individuals with stories, struggles, and vulnerabilities. The Judge's action was a testament to the power of empathy, a beacon of light amidst the often careless courtroom norm.

And so, we share this story not merely as a recounting of events but as a reminder that even in the solemn halls of justice, compassion has a place, and kindness can leave a mark on the lives it touches.



Courtwatching is taking care of each other. Taking care of our community. Our loved ones need people like you to help.



Read our Courtwatch report

This report describes a massive public safety emergency.

Without any trial, our District Court is committing hundreds of people each year to weeks or months in a horrific and deadly jail, violating both the U.S. Constitution and the Maryland Rules designed by the courts themselves.

For details and documentation (and a path forward), please see our report, and please forward to anyone you think may be interested.



Upcoming Events

Join us for our Post-Conviction Forum!

The purpose and significance of this forum is to give answers to Impacted people and their families on Post Conviction - on the State and Federal level!

- Date: September 07, 2024
- Time: 8:00am - 4:00pm EST
- Location: Howard University
2900 Van Ness St. NW
Washington, DC 20008
- Please click [HERE](#) to register!

Join our Research Committee



The Research Committee exists to research any questions that Courtwatch PG would like us to research, such as aspects of the law, the institutional context of bond hearings, conditions in the jail, and the way the criminal legal system approaches people with mental health difficulties. One of our tools is the Maryland Public Information Act, which allows us to demand information from any government agency in the state.

BOND BAFFLER: FIND THE BOND HEARING LEGAL TERMS/

G F Y E C N E T N E S C K O T D D G F Y B I I M X
 F R S P S Z G F O A Q O K L M N E E A E E Y W T S
 X Z L F X Z S P I I J N Y J P B I H F C L C J U A
 W V Z P P E R Z S H Y D J U D P Z A N E M O K I Z
 S V P T C E E V I X G I R N E E C A L S N L N V Z
 I T L U T V B T V Z C T X W V O Z A B P Y D Y Y X
 D Y R R R T R C R D N I P Z L I P L E A M V A S O
 I E I Q O U S V E I Y O K F N A A P U O O O M N B
 D A J M J N U W P Z M N N G L N I P J D H M C R T
 L M F X R L F A U Z Y S O Y W O V R L R Q H E W U
 K M R R N C E X S V A C E G D U J V T D Q Y R A O
 U M B B M I S D E M E A N O R Z U K I R N D B B Y
 S U S W A M E P T R V E B O D A C W Z X L O J Y J
 Y P S Y F L U B B C R A V H K Z E E E Q P T X K Q
 J H R W G Z N P V O Y D H A T T O R N E Y S P G P
 V J F S C F S F T F U S H I W Z O X X V O U P K Q
 W T T H N Y E U T E V F J G J N U L L S S C U N Q
 C C M K C R C B S W S O K K S K D J O L F U V N M
 J D I W F E U E E F A S H K N A O W I J C V U W A
 O W O D S W R V R A P R Q U D W L A I C P T W Z F
 B P M O K H E G R R R N R G V C B K T R G T Z E I
 O R R M W A D X A C B J A A Z C F B D U X N P G W
 R P H C V C M K Y L M S A A N Z R W T U Y R N A Q
 O O F G X B H U D L X M Z E P T W Q V B V H D C E
 N I L U H D R T B Q C R O W O I C K U V M S K X O

WORD BANK

- SUPERVISION
- RECOGNIZANCE
- ATTORNEY
- DEFENDANT
- UNSECURED
- PRETRIAL
- JUDGE
- TRIAL
- CUSTODY
- PROSECUTOR
- PLEA
- FELONY
- CONDITIONS
- SECURED
- SENTENCE
- COMPLAINT
- ARREST
- BAIL
- MISDEMEANOR
- WARRANT

SUPPORT OUR SEPTEMBER POST CONVICTION FORUM: YOUR CONTRIBUTION MATTERS!

AS WE GEAR UP FOR OUR UPCOMING SEPTEMBER POST CONVICTION FORUM, WE'RE REACHING OUT TO ASK FOR YOUR SUPPORT. YOUR GENEROSITY CAN TRULY MAKE A WORLD OF DIFFERENCE IN OUR MISSION TO PROMOTE JUSTICE AND REFORM. BY DONATING TODAY, YOU'RE HELPING US BUILD A BRIGHTER FUTURE FOR THOSE IN NEED. EVERY CONTRIBUTION, NO MATTER THE SIZE, COUNTS. JOIN US IN MAKING A POSITIVE IMPACT - DONATE NOW AND BE A PART OF THE CHANGE. THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROSITY!

