

## 2014 LEGISLATIVE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

### PUBLIC SAFETY AND JUSTICE

- The General Assembly passed legislation recommended by a 20-member legislative task force that conducted a review of current law regarding the state's participation in the National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS) as it pertains to mental health. Under legislation stemming from the panel's findings, the District Court would submit limited information to NICS about individuals who are involuntarily committed for mental health treatment and pose a threat of violence to themselves or others.
- The General Assembly approved a measure requiring the collection of DNA samples from any person arrested for a crime of violence, with the assurance that the sample will be expunged if the person is found or proven innocent.
- Lawmakers additionally approved legislation authorizing judges and magistrates to prohibit individuals adjudicated of driving under the influence from operating vehicles that are not equipped with ignition interlock systems.
- The Assembly passed legislation adding an additional term of up to 10 years for any felony committed in association with any criminal street gang. The sentence is to be served consecutively with whatever sentence the defendant receives for the crime itself.
- Lawmakers also created "child safe zones," prohibiting any facility that provides programs or services intended primarily for minors from employing a registered sex offender.
- Lawmakers allowed the passage of two bills related to internet crime. The first bill closes a loophole and makes it a felony to electronically disseminate sexually explicit images to minors, including photos and videos, as well as live sex acts transmitted via webcam. The second creates a computer crime of "online impersonation," making it a felony to use the name or persona of another person in various online formats without that person's express consent.
- The Assembly gave final approval to the 2014 Student and Employee Social Media Privacy acts that will bar employers from demanding social media-related materials of job applicants, and will establish similar prohibitions for colleges as they consider prospective students.
- Legislators adopted legislation, also known as "Erin's Law," to establish a comprehensive school program to provide an age-appropriate course of instruction in the prevention of child abduction, child sexual exploitation and child sexual abuse.
- The Assembly made the manufacture, sale or possession of 1 ounce to 1 kilogram of a mixture or substance containing a detectable amount of synthetic drugs punishable by imprisonment of up to 50 years and a fine of up to \$500,000. The new law also makes manufacture, possession or sale of more than 1 kilogram of such substances punishable by a prison term of up to life and a fine of up to \$1 million.

- The General Assembly has approved legislation that will allow the release of patient records for investigation and prosecution if a health care provider believes, after providing services to the elder patient, that the patient is or has been physically, psychologically or sexually abused, neglected or exploited. The statute of limitations for elder exploitation will also increase from three to 10 years under separate legislation approved by lawmakers.