

Source: [Legal](#) > [States Legal - U.S.](#) > [Maryland](#) > [General News & Information](#) > [The Daily Record \(Baltimore, MD\)](#)   
Terms: "alan m. wilner" or "alan wilner" ([Edit Search](#) | [Suggest Terms for My Search](#))

Select for FOCUS™ or Delivery

*Md. Officials Host Russian Party Looking to Learn of Trial by Jury Law in Former Soviet State Requires Jury Trials Return In Felony Cases, So Tour Group Looks to Md. for Advice The Daily Record (Baltimore, MD.) October 22, 1996, Tuesday*

Copyright 1996 The Daily Record Co.  
The Daily Record (Baltimore, MD.)

October 22, 1996, Tuesday

**SECTION:** Pg. 13

**LENGTH:** 604 words

**HEADLINE:** Md. Officials Host Russian Party Looking to Learn of Trial by Jury Law in Former Soviet State Requires Jury Trials Return In Felony Cases, So Tour Group Looks to Md. for Advice

**BYLINE:** By Catherine M. Brennan; Daily Record Legal Affairs Writer

**BODY:**

A delegation of Russian nationals visiting the Baltimore area to learn how the United States legal system functions yesterday received an inside look at how Maryland handles its docket.

The five-person group -- hailing from the Leningrad region of Russia -- is touring Maryland's courts and jails to learn how justice is done in the United States -- a visit particularly relevant as Russia begins to reinstitute the right to trial by jury.

Chief Judge of the Court of Special Appeals **Alan M. Wilner** and Assistant Attorney General Melanie Senter Lubin played host to the the delegation, comprised of lawyers, judges, government officials educators and doctors.

"To the extent that the country can latch onto the rule of law and away from arbitrariness, it makes the drive for world peace a little easier," Wilner said.

Under the Soviet legal system, criminal defendants were not entitled to a jury trial. Before the Revolution, Russia utilized jury trials in criminal cases from 1864 to 1917.

And a Russian Federation law enacted in 1992 requires the Leningrad region to reinstitute jury trials in felony cases, prompting a desire of the part of Russia to examine how jury trials are conducted.

"Funding for jury trials is expected to become available in 1997, so there is a special need to work on this particularly now," Attorney General J. Joseph Curran Jr. said.

Wilner, who accompanied the group as they visited the Baltimore County Courthouse and the county's detention center yesterday, went to Russia last May along with Curran and observed the Russian court system first-hand.

"It was a small courtroom and there was very little live testimony. The defendant was placed in a cage and questioned by a judge," Wilner said.

"There was also no court reporter so no record was made of the testimony or proceedings," he added.

Wilner expressed hope the Russian delegation's visit to Maryland would aid them in creating a court system that incorporates the trial-by-jury concept.

"Many Russians want to change the current system. The issue is how far they want and will be able to change it," Wilner said.

Yesterday, the group toured the Baltimore County Sheriff's Office with County Sheriff Norman Peppersack.

Peppersack showed the group how persons in pretrial custody -- either because they couldn't make bail or weren't eligible -- are held in holding cells adjacent to the court rooms.

"They're always locked up," he said, "unless they're in the courtroom."

"Or unless they're acquitted," Wilner quipped.

Russian participant Georgiy Nikolaevich Porukov, who served as Public Prosecutor of the Leningrad Region, the equivalent of a State's Attorney, observed that the court room was similar to those in Russia.

"But you have the person in a cage," Wilner noted.

Baltimore County Detention Center Administrator James M. Dean later offered the group an inside look at the detention center, which houses about 1,400 people awaiting trial or serving short sentences.

Curran said that the Attorney General's Office and the state have proposed a two-phase project to the Russians, to help them establish a trial-by-jury system.

Phase One -- which is being implemented now -- involves a delegation of judges, lawyers and justice ministry persons visiting Maryland.

Phase Two will involve a delegation from Maryland returning to St. Petersburg to engage in more intensive discussions and training.

According to Wilner, Phase Two should be implemented next year.

"We were hoping that the visit and the training would take place at the end of this year, but their government fell," Wilner said.

**LOAD-DATE:** October 25, 1996

Source: [Legal](#) > [States Legal - U.S.](#) > [Maryland](#) > [General News & Information](#) > [The Daily Record \(Baltimore, MD\)](#) 

Terms: "alan m. wilner" or "alan wilner" ([Edit Search](#) | [Suggest Terms for My Search](#))

View: Full

Date/Time: Monday, December 18, 2006 - 11:41 AM EST



[About LexisNexis](#) | [Terms & Conditions](#)

Copyright © 2006 LexisNexis, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.