



"Being here for Maryland's Children, Youth, and Families"

Testimony submitted to Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

March 10, 2021

Senate Bill 842 – Workgroup to Study the Assessment, Treatment, and Available Resources for Female Youth in Contact With the Justice System
Support with Amendment

The Maryland Association of Youth Service Bureaus (MAYSB), which represents a network of Bureaus throughout the State of Maryland, supports *Senate Bill 842 - Workgroup to Study the Assessment, Treatment, and Available Resources for Female Youth in Contact With the Justice System* with one amendment to be included on the workgroup. Youth Service Bureaus (YSBs) are community-based programs that work with youth and their families to decrease the likelihood of youth involvement or re-involvement with the Department of Juvenile Services (DJS).

SB 842 establishes a Workgroup to review the treatment and interventions provided to females who come into contact with the juvenile justice system.

Research shows that effective community programs, like Youth Service Bureaus, are more likely than arrest or institutional confinement to facilitate the healthy development of the involved youth. Evidence-based or best practice services have proven successful in reducing recidivism in the youth who come to the juvenile justice system's attention and diverting youth from going deeper into the system. MAYSB believes that the child welfare system or mental health system is a more appropriate service for many young people who have contact with the juvenile justice system. We ask for a representative of our statewide association be included as a member of the Workgroup.

SB 842 highlights an important issue, often overlooked, of how females enter and move through the juvenile justice system. This legislation is timely and important as Maryland continues to examine and update how the juvenile justice system can better serve Maryland's youth. The Data Resource Guide 2020 for DJS indicates that of the total complaints received in 2020 (14,913), 30% were females (4,332). Seventy percent of these females were youth of color. In addition, female youth represented approximately 14% of the population of youth committed to the care and custody of DJS during FY 2020. Sixty eight percent of these females were youth of color.

Maryland has been working toward establishing a juvenile system that is in line with the research on brain development and thus developmentally informed. A developmentally informed system recognizes the need to hold youth accountable for their actions while also offering them the resources and opportunities to be rehabilitated, recognizes that youth are still maturing and that their brains are not fully developed until after age 24, and establishes a fair system to ensure that all youth receive fair and equal treatment. This bill will assist the State of Maryland in developing policies and procedures appropriate for females and in addressing the racial and ethnic disparities found in the juvenile justice system, such as those for females of color.

The amendment we request is:

On page 2 after line 20 add:

(10) ONE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE MARYLAND ASSOCIATION OF YOUTH SERVICE BUREAUS.

We request that you give SB 842 a favorable report with this amendment.

Respectfully Submitted:

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