

February 01, 2022

Neighbors of District 41
Community Support for SB003

Dear Chair Kelley, Vice Chair Feldman and Members of the Senate Finance Committee:

We, community leaders in the 41st Legislative District, support Senate Bill 3/House Bill 297 (Facilities - Disabilities, Juveniles, Behavioral Health, and Health Care - Safety Plans), which are sponsored by Senator Jill P. Carter and Delegate Samuel I. Rosenberg, respectively. This legislation builds upon Senate Bill 96 of last year's session, which required the Behavioral Health Administration to adopt regulations requiring residential facilities to establish and implement a safety plan for the safety of individuals served by those programs and their surrounding communities.

SB 3 and HB 297 would impose that requirement on community facilities of the Juvenile Services Administration and the Developmental Disabilities Administration. In recent years, violence has riddled local youth facilities, putting the safety of both the children and our communities in jeopardy. Juvenile Services has made substantial investments in rehabilitation efforts, including a revamped education program, but there is more work to do. With crime on the rise and the capacity of facilities dwindling, we should ensure the security of all parties.¹

The Attorney General's Office has recommended increased oversight in juvenile facilities. In addition to recommending modernized prevention methods, the Juvenile Justice Monitoring Unit has decided to close four facilities, in part because of the lack of protection.² A mandated safety plan will better inform the

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<https://www.marylandmatters.org/2021/12/17/juvenile-services-appoints-first-educational-program-superintendent/>

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<https://www.baltimoresun.com/news/crime/bs-md-cr-juvenile-detentions-proposed-closures-20211117-smc7qmcxjndgdawa5pewsfivs-story.html>

<https://foxbaltimore.com/features/operation-crime-justice/violence-inside-baltimores-juvenile-detention-center>

actions of staff, some of whose inactions have enabled this violence and others who have violated the sanctity of children.³

As such we, the below signed neighborhood leaders, urge the Senate Finance Committee to support SB 03 and the Health and Government Operations Committee to support HB 297.

Respectfully Signed,

Cynthia Shaw, Lyndhurst Community Association, President
Arnold G. Foster, Jr., Ashburton Area Association, President
Caren Cutler, Cross Country Improvement Association, Secretary
Yeshiyah B. Israel, Pimlico Community Association, President
Deborah Colvin, President Edgewood Neighborhood Association

³ <https://statesattorney.us/former-victor-cullen-center-employee-facing-sex-abuse-of-a-minor-charges/>
<https://foxbaltimore.com/features/operation-crime-justice/violence-inside-baltimores-juvenile-detention-center>