

ADRIAN BOAFO
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ASSISTANT MAJORITY LEADER

Economic Matters Committee



The Maryland House of Delegates
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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Chairman Ben Barnes
Appropriations Committee
House Office Building, Room 120
Annapolis, MD

Dear Chairman Barnes, Vice-Chair Chang, and Members of the Appropriations Committee,

For over 40 years, Maryland's Youth Service Bureaus have been pivotal in providing effective youth delinquency diversion treatment and family intervention services. These programs are vital in nurturing competent and responsible youth who can contribute positively to society. Through robust partnerships with local schools, faith-based organizations, and government agencies, these bureaus have been instrumental in enhancing the well-being of Maryland's children, youth, and families.

However, over the years, funding cuts have significantly hampered the effectiveness of these bureaus. At their peak, there were 21 strong bureaus, but now only 7 remain. HB1136 aims to address this issue by reinstating much-needed funding to these essential services.

The success of Youth Service Bureaus is backed by concrete data. According to the Department of Juvenile Services, 95% of youth served in formal counseling do not enter the juvenile justice system two years after counseling, demonstrating the effectiveness of these programs in diverting youth from the justice system. Additionally, 80% of youth assessed by Youth Service Bureaus in Maryland show significant improvement, surpassing the national standard of 60%.

To rebuild the network of Youth Service Bureaus and meet the growing demand for services, HB1136 proposes \$4.8 million in funding beginning in FY 26. This funding would not only strengthen the existing bureaus but also enable the establishment of seven additional programs, ensuring that every jurisdiction in Maryland has access to these vital services.

While I understand the challenges of our budget, I urge the committee to support HB1136 and work towards securing the necessary funding to ensure the well-being and future success of Maryland's youth.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Adrian Boafo".

Delegate Adrian Boafo