



# CITY OF COLLEGE PARK

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR & CITY COUNCIL

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Delegate Ben Barnes  
Room 121  
House Office Building  
Annapolis, MD 214401

RE: Human Services - Youth Services Bureaus - Funding (Youth Services Bureau Restoration Act)

Dear Chair Barnes and Appropriations Committee Members,

The City of College Park strongly supports House Bill 1136, which will provide funding for Youth Services Bureaus (YSBs). YSBs were established by State law and are an effective state and local government partnership. Until the early 2000's there were 21 YSBs in nine jurisdictions across the State. There are now just seven YSBs statewide, each with the mission to provide quality outpatient mental health and related services to youth and their families.

The College Park YSB was established in 1974 as a partnership with the State to provide delinquency prevention, parent support groups, counseling, child hunger prevention, and community outreach with funds from both the State and local government. For over 50 years, College Park Youth Service Bureau has provided community-based wrap around services, in particular family counseling services to assist youth and their families.

When the funding was originated in the State, Youth Service Bureaus were placed under the Department of Juvenile Services and continue statutorily there today. College Park has successfully been monitored by the Department of Juvenile Services annually, maintaining its designation as a Youth Service Bureau. Funding Youth Service Bureaus will allow this long-term partnership to continue and re-establish state monies for other youth service bureaus across the State of Maryland who lost funding because of shifting priorities and budget cuts in previous administrations.

College Park Youth Service Bureau provides effective services to our community, is responsive to local needs and offers families a safe place to address difficult issues such as truancy, violence, trauma, bullying, depression, and suicidal ideation. To ensure that the youth and caregivers all learn new skills and strategies to decrease problem behavior, College Park adheres to the philosophy of working with the entire family system. We, along with other YSBs, work closely with community entities such as the Police, Department of Juvenile Services, schools, and social service agencies to assist youth and families in crisis by providing resources and mental health services.

The funding this bill provides would increase the wrap-around and preventative services desperately needed to address growing youth mental health needs and to address juvenile crime in our community. The services are proven to work in keeping young people out of the criminal justice system, with Youth Services Bureaus consistently having a 95% success rate in diverting youth from juvenile services.

We respectfully request that you support the funding of Youth Services Bureaus by voting in favor of this legislation.

Sincerely,



Fazlul Kabir  
Mayor

cc: 21<sup>st</sup> District Delegation