



## TESTIMONY FOR HB0855 Juvenile Law - Restrictive Housing - Limitations

**Bill Sponsor:** Delegates Bartlett and J. Lewis

**Committee:** Judiciary

**Organization Submitting:** Maryland Legislative Coalition

**Person Submitting:** Aileen Alex, co-chair

**Position:** FAVORABLE

I am submitting this testimony in favor of HB0855 on behalf of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. The Maryland Legislative Coalition is an association of activists - individuals and grassroots groups in every district in the state. We are unpaid citizen lobbyists, and our Coalition supports well over 30,000 members.

Restrictive housing, as defined as the practice of housing inmates separately from the general population of a correctional institution, can have disproportionately negative consequences for juveniles. Isolation can impact the mental and physical health of vulnerable youth, who are at a higher risk of suicide. Education is disrupted, hindering growth and rehabilitation.

This bill seeks to limit the use of restrictive housing for juveniles, except when no alternative exists. In contrast, HB0855 also allows a minor to request restrictive housing. A minor might seek this situation as a safety precaution when at physical risk or in danger of contracting a communicable disease.

MLC supports a bill that seeks to lessen the school-to-prison pipeline. There is a greater chance for rehabilitation for the young offender by effectively eliminating the use of solitary except when it might be advantageous for the individual.

We support this bill and recommend a **FAVORABLE** report in committee.