



Feb 12, 2024

Senator William Smith
Chair, Judicial Proceedings Committee
11 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: SB 326

Dear Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher and Committee members,

I'm writing today on behalf of the Greater Salisbury Committee, in support of Senate Bill 326. We believe this bill is needed and necessary.

The Wicomico County Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Micah Stauffer, has been in a multitude of meetings over the last 6 months on the topic of juvenile justice/juvenile crime, and the impact it is having on the Wicomico County Public Schools. He has met with many of his peer Superintendents from the Lower/Mid-Shore area, as well as many of the State's Attorneys from our area – including Wicomico State's Attorney Jamie Dykes.

We believe SB 326 gets to the heart of the matter. The Child Interrogation Protection Act, or CIPA, has functionally eliminated the ability of law enforcement to interview juvenile suspects. This bill makes one modest change to CIPA that increases our ability to protect both children and public safety in only the most critical contexts. When a child is arrested for a firearms offense, CIPA essentially prevents law enforcement from questioning them about where they obtained the firearm. The same can be said about crimes of violence. We believe SB 326 will help address some unintended consequences of CIPA.

There is a concern among local police agencies, the faith-based community, families, and the business community as a whole that the Juvenile Justice Reform Act, passed by the Maryland General Assembly in 2022, went too far – and has left police with fewer resources to investigate and interview juveniles who may be involved in serious and violent crimes. This is having a negative impact in our schools and a concerning effect in our community.

We urge that SB 326 receive favorable consideration in Committee.

Sincerely,

Mike Dunn, President/CEO, Greater Salisbury Committee