



To: Members of The Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee  
From: Doyle Niemann, Chair, Legislative Committee, Criminal Law and Practice Section,  
Maryland State Bar Association  
Date: February 9, 2024  
Subject: **SB636 - Commission to Study the Ability of the Department of Juvenile Services to  
Provide Effective Social Services to Juvenile Offenders**  
Position: **SUPPORT**

---

The Legislative Committee of the Criminal Law & Practice Section of the Maryland State Bar Association (MSBA) **Supports SB636 - Commission to Study the Ability of the Department of Juvenile Services to Provide Effective Social Services.**

This bill creates a broad-based commission to study the ability of the Department of Juvenile Services to provide effective services to juvenile offenders and requires a report by the end of 2025.

There has been considerable attention over the last several years to the issue of juvenile justice, including major pieces of legislation, with even more now under consideration. At the heart of the debate is the ability of the Department of Juvenile Services to respond to juvenile offenders in ways that discourage and prevent future offenses. This is a real-world question for which there is a good body of research and evidence, as well as examples of things that work and things that don't. The proposed commission will provide a way to look at that evidence, as well as at the way we currently handle juvenile offenders and propose changes to make our system more effective.

In doing so, the proposed commission can help remove the discussion from one of opinion to one of evidence and results. That is in the best interests of everyone involved.

For the reasons stated, we **Support SB636 – Commission to Study the Ability of DJS to Provide Effective Social Services.**

If you have questions about the position of the Criminal Law and Practice Section's Legislative Committee, please feel free to address them to me at 240-606-1298 or at [doyleniemann@gmail.com](mailto:doyleniemann@gmail.com).

Should you have other questions, please contact The MSBA's Legislative Office at (410) 387-5606..

---

Dana O. Williams  
President-Elect

Deborah L. Potter  
Secretary

Hon. Mark F. Scurti  
Treasurer

Victor L. Velazquez  
Executive Director