



OFFICE OF THE STATE'S ATTORNEY FOR BALTIMORE CITY

February 08, 2024

The Honorable Luke Clippinger, Chairman
House Judiciary Committee
6 Bladen Street, House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: Support of HB313 Juvenile Law – Probation AND HB314 Juvenile Law – Probation
– Technical Violations

Dear Chairman Clippinger and Members of the Judiciary Committee:

I am writing to express my support for both HB313 Juvenile Law – Probation and HB314 Juvenile Law – Probation – Technical Violations. Handgun violations, car thefts and carjackings committed by juvenile offenders are plaguing our communities sparking rightful outrage and demands for reform of the current juvenile justice system model. Day after day, we are hearing from residents across our city demanding accountability. Such accountability requires comprehensive reform to the current laws controlling crimes committed by juveniles. Working within the tenets of rehabilitation governing the juvenile justice system, my office remains committed to catalyzing and supporting those legislative efforts which better hold accountable and rehabilitate violent juvenile offenders.

The current juvenile probation laws are inadequate. Over the past year, we have experienced too many violent criminal acts perpetrated by juveniles under supervision or should have been under supervision. Multiple juvenile offenders are facing charges stemming from the violent Brooklyn Day tragedy in which two lost their lives and more than twenty were injured. In the months to follow, our city has been besieged with violent carjackings and car thefts committed by juveniles who too often should have still been on probation or their probation violated.

Under the current system, the initial term of probation for acts that are equivalent to adult misdemeanors is six (6) months. For acts that are equivalent to adult felony offenses, the term increases to one (1) year. Following the initial term of probation, a Court may extend probation for good cause if the purpose is to ensure completion of treatment or a rehabilitative program. Such extensions are three-month blocks of time and are subject to a max of one (1) year for misdemeanors and two (2) years for felonies. This current law is unnecessarily truncated and creates a difficult burden for the State to meet in order to



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continue supervision and takes the discretion away from the Courts. HB313 will loosen the ability to contemplate a probationary period which is more accurately reflective of the full rehabilitative needs of juvenile offenders.

As well, HB314 will authorize a Court to order community detention in response to a technical violation of probation committed by a juvenile offender. Under current law, detention may *not* be authorized for technical violations. Changing the law to permit contemplation of detention for technical, as well as graduated sanctions for further violations, will permit a Court to take more responsive action that better assures our communities will remain safer.

I support HB313 and HB314. I appreciate the Committee's consideration in issuing a favorable report on both bills. We look forward to continued conversation regarding juvenile justice reform measures such as these which advance our shared goal of a safer community.

Sincerely,

Ivan J. Bates

Ivan J. Bates
State's Attorney for Baltimore City

By: Hassan Giordano
Chief, External Affairs