



Testimony of the Mayor and Council of Rockville
HB 814 – Department of Juvenile Services - Report on Youth Service Bureaus
SUPPORT

Good afternoon, Chair Smith and members of the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee. I am Rockville City Councilmember Marissa Valeri, and I thank you for this opportunity. We thank Delegate Taylor for sponsoring this important legislation.

The Rockville Mayor and Council unanimously support HB 814, which asks the Department of Juvenile Services (DJS) to provide a Report outlining the Department's efforts to collaborate with Local Governments in the funding and establishment of Youth Service Bureaus (YSBs) and collaborations between DJS and YSBs to prevent delinquency.

The City was a partner with the State for many years, as a designated YSB, to provide delinquency prevention and intervention services based on funds from both the State and local government. Without state funding, it is now not designated as a Youth Service Bureau but it has continued offering the same services, with city and county funding, as the School and Community Youth Services Program (SCYS). Rockville could benefit from partnering again with the state to facilitate serving more children, youth, and families as the need continues to grow. We request that the State reinstate funding Youth Service Bureaus, which are critically needed to support the well-being of our Youth.

The Rockville SCYS is based in several schools and in the community and has provided mental health services, youth development, and enrichment programs to support youth and their families. The benefits of the program include:

- Service provisions to address social isolation, academic struggles, social emotional delays due to the pandemic, and positive youth development.
- Youth and their families have benefited from assistance addressing depression, anxiety, trauma, substance misuse, and mood and behavior regulation.
- Program staff have seen students succeed in the home, schools, and communities, who, without assistance, were losing self-esteem and struggling to have hope for success.

YSBs are critical community resources that provide effective mental health and prevention services that our youth and families desperately need. HB 814 is an important step forward in elevating the need for YSBs in Maryland. For these reasons, we urge the committee to provide HB 814 with a favorable report.