



**TARA H. JACKSON**  
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Testimony in **Support** of

SB0081 – School Resource Officers – Prohibition on Sexual Activity with  
Students

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Dear Chairman, Vice Chairman, and Members of the Committee:

I am writing to show my strong support for Senate Bill 0081 on behalf of State's Attorney Tara Jackson and the Maryland State's Attorneys' Association, and to urge a favorable report. Passage of Senate Bill 0081 would prohibit School Resource Officers from taking advantage of the inherent power imbalance between their position and that of the students under their authority by engaging in sexual relationships with those students.

I serve as the Chief of the Special Victims Unit at the State's Attorney's Office for Prince George's County. My staff and I carry an extensive caseload of cases involving the exploitation and abuse of children. Unfortunately, this abuse often occurs in places where children should feel the safest, including schools.

Current Maryland law CR §3-308(b)(c)(1) and (c)(2) prohibit a person in a position of authority from engaging in vaginal intercourse, a sexual act, or sexual contact with a student enrolled at a school where the person in a position of authority works. However, CR §3-308(a)(2) does not include School Resource Officers under its definition of a "person in a position of authority," though it does list principals, vice principals, teachers, coaches, and school counselors.

Senate Bill 0081 seeks to close this loophole by including students enrolled in a school where a law enforcement officer is assigned as a School Resource Officer to the list of persons with whom that law enforcement officer may not engage in a sexual relationship under CR §3-314(e). Since School Resource Officers are required to be law enforcement officers pursuant to

Education §7-1501, this adjustment to the law elegantly serves to protect students from becoming victims within the hallways of our schools.

Senate Bill 0081 is a common-sense adjustment to the law that further demonstrates that our community will not tolerate adults who take advantage of their positions of authority to exploit children. For the foregoing reasons, I respectfully urge a favorable report on SB 0081.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'JLG', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Jessica L. Garth  
Chief, Special Victims Unit  
State's Attorney's Office for Prince George's County