

House Bill 709 - Human Services - Youth Services Bureaus - Funding

Answers to questions raised in the letter of information submitted by the Maryland Association of Local Management Boards

The Maryland Association of Local Management Boards asked the following questions about House Bill 709:

- How will children be better off if this action were passed? Local Management Boards are sticklers for results and ultimately making sure that any strategy implemented makes children and families better off because of the service provided. Detailed performance measurement is necessary in every program. Does this bill require any measurement of Youth Service Bureaus' performance?
 - *YSBs use a sophisticated youth assessment tool called the Child And Adolescent Functional Assessment Scale (CAFAS). This tool was chosen in agreement with the Governor's Office for Children. Mental health practitioners use the CAFAS to provide a comprehensive assessment, track outcomes and inform decisions about treatment and level of care. The CAFAS is designed for ages 5 to 19 and generates outcome indicators and clinical markers honed by years of research, which greatly assists with interpretation.*
 - *In addition, the Department of Juvenile Services annually conducts a two-year follow-up study to determine the effectiveness of YSBs in diverting youth from deeper involvement in the juvenile justice system. The most recent analysis, released in January 2020, demonstrated that 99% of youth served were not re-adjudicated within 2 years after ending treatment at a YSB.*
- What added value will this action bring to Maryland? Several Local Management Board Directors in the association note that the Youth Service Bureaus are doing a good job in their community. Will this legislation provide any additional value? In other words what will the passing of this bill create beyond what is already happening without it?
 - *Passing this legislation will bring two invaluable benefits to Maryland's communities. First, it will ensure services in communities remain there. With the Governor's Office for Children planning to make all funding for children's services competitive, this bill will protect YSB services. Second, because of the de-funding and closing of bureaus over the last few years, the money made available through this legislation could be used to re-open or start new YSBs in new communities.*

- Was local input sought in the formation of this legislation? Local Management Boards were established by law to assess community needs and gaps in services then work with the local community to create services and programs that fill those needs. We are fearful that this bill ignores the input of the consumers it aims to serve.
 - ***Unfortunately, the Governor's Office for Children has in recent years been specifically rejecting funding for individual programming requested by LMBs. As local control over funding decisions erodes, this bill will protect existing services.***

- Will this bill cut funding for other necessary services in local jurisdictions? The association has grave concerns that the result of this bill may ultimately move money away from other programs that are equally or more necessary in local jurisdictions.
 - ***The intent of this bill is to replicate the earmarking of funding for YSBs that had taken place for many years. The General Assembly used budget language to ensure these services continued. Because the Governor will no longer spend money that is earmarked for legislative priorities, it is necessary to do this statutorily. This proposal will not take additional dollars away from other children's services.***

- Is this bill fair for other providers of children and family services? Will this action create an unfair advantage? The State and local jurisdictions have policies to prevent unfair competition for government resources. It is a concern that funding for a particular vendor will establish an unfair disadvantage for other equally competent providers of service.
 - ***The Maryland Association of Youth Service Bureaus has offered for many years to work with the State to devise a grant process. To date, there has been no effort by the Governor's Office for Children to work with its partners to create a process that includes holding communities that have these services harmless. This bill maintains the history of achieving successful outcomes through our longstanding state-local partnerships.***