



City of Bowie

15901 Excalibur Road
Bowie, Maryland 20716

Testimony submitted to the Senate Budget & Tax Committee

February 18, 2020

House Bill 709- Please Support

The City of Bowie strongly supports designated Youth Service Bureau (YSB) funding, as proposed in House Bill 709 and Senate Bill 490. As you may know, the city has successfully collaborated with the state in the funding of our Youth Service Bureau for the past 49 years. YSB funding was originally a designated line in the state budget. This was a fitting arrangement, considering the key role that Youth Service Bureaus have played in diverting youth who have broken the law and with preventing their initial involvement with the legal system. YSBs were originally created to provide these services. Since a new funding model was adopted, budgets have been uncertain, creating a situation where our ability to provide services for all youth who need them is at risk. For this reason and others, returning to designated state funding for YSBs makes sense.

Bowie Youth & Family Services provides counseling services, parenting classes, psycho-educational groups, crisis intervention services, mentoring, school-based life skills and other prevention programs for hundreds of our local youth each year. They do highly effective work and are a vital part of our system of care. The City of Bowie's Youth Service Bureau is a primary source of support for our youth who are experiencing mental health or behavior issues and provides programs that are specifically tailored to the needs of our community. It is critical that these services for at-risk youth remain a priority.

In addition, YSBs receive oversight from three state-funded entities: the GOC, the Local Management Boards and DJS. The bill would reduce this redundancy and still maintain the oversight mandated in state law.

Please support designated funding for Youth Service Bureaus by voting in favor of HB709.

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