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Judicial Proceedings Committee

Joint Committee on
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THE SENATE OF MARYLAND

ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

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Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

Senate Bill 467 - State Advisory Board for Juvenile Services – Membership

Senate Bill 467 is a very simple bill to add two seats to the State Advisory Board for Juvenile Services and designates that they be employees of the Department of Juvenile Services (DJS). They would both be appointed by the President of AFSCME Council 3 which is the union that represents employees at the Department of Juvenile Services. It is expected that of the two employees, one would work inside a DJS facility and one would work in the field.

This legislation is important because although there are many people on the board, none are directly involved in the day-to-day provision of services in the department. The bulk of the members on the board are managers from state agencies (or their designees), the judiciary, law enforcement and community stakeholders.

The purpose of the board includes consulting with and advising the Secretary of Juvenile Services about ways to improve policies and programs as well as evaluating them. Recently, the legislature added to their responsibilities by including a review of fatalities that occur under the jurisdiction of the department. Because DJS employees are on the front lines, they will bring a valuable voice to the process.

This Board is long-standing. It was formed in 1966 and meets six times per year. A review of recent minutes shows that the Advisory Board reviews some critical questions such as how educational needs of its clients may be served, how the Juvenile Service Monitoring Program is evaluating the department and how various reforms are impacting the goals of the department.

Employees who provide the services directly, either within facilities or in the community, have a perspective that provides a close look at the impact of programming. This includes offering ideas on ways to assist juveniles in their education and ways to help with their re-entry to, and success in the community.

State employees will add a useful perspective to the State Advisory Board. For this reason, we urge you to provide a favorable report on SB 467.