



POSITION ON PROPOSED LEGISLATION

BILL: HB 327
POSITION: Support
DATE: February 5, 2020

At the Office of the Public Defender, our juvenile defenders see the consequences of the school-to-prison pipeline. Many of our clients enter the system for the first time because they were arrested in school for behaviors that should have and could have been addressed as matters of regular school discipline. However, there is a lack of clear definition for both school resource officers and school administrators on the role of the school resource officer in the school. Too often school resource officers are asked to engage in matters that should be handled through regular school discipline procedures.

Since the passage of the Safe Schools Act of 2018, and the introduction of hundreds of school resource officers in our schools around the state, there has been an increase in the number of citations issued in schools. During the January 15, 2020 briefing by the Maryland Center for School Safety before the Ways and Means Education Subcommittee this was acknowledged. A clear demarcation of role and responsibility is imperative for students, teachers, administrators and school resource officers. We need to provide a safe learning environment for our students while not contributing to the school-to-prison pipeline.