



POSITION ON PROPOSED LEGISLATION

Bill: House Bill 394- Fees for Summer School Courses – Prohibition

Position: Support

Date: January 17, 2021

The Maryland Office of the Public Defender respectfully requests that the Committee issue a favorable report on House Bill 394.

Under this legislation, a student would not be charged a fee or tuition to attend summer school if the student: 1) attends school in the district; 2) requires the course in order to graduate; and 3) previously took the course and did not successfully complete or receive credit for the course.

Charging fees or tuition to attend summer school is especially harmful to indigent students. Over half of the local school districts within the state of Maryland charge tuition, which places summer school out of the reach of our clients. The sad fact is that all of our juvenile clients live in poverty and their family's inability to pay summer school tuition hinders their ability to graduate. Access to a public school graduation should remain free at all times of the year, including the summer months. Without these required courses needed for graduation, students are ultimately unable to earn a high school diploma. HB 394 will help end the cycle of poverty perpetuated by lack of educational access.

In short, summer school enrollment fees guarantee that indigent students in the state of Maryland are discriminated against solely because of their family's income. For these reasons, the Maryland Office of the Public Defender urge a favorable report on HB 394.