

THE COALITION TO PROTECT MARYLAND'S CHILDREN

Our Mission: To combine and amplify the power of organizations and citizens working together to keep children safe from abuse and neglect. We strive to secure the budgetary and public policy resources to make meaningful and measurable improvements in safety, permanence, and well-being.

Testimony to the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

**SB905 - Juvenile Services - Workgroup to Develop Evidence-Based, Research-Based, and Culturally Competent Practices
March 3, 2021**

**** SUPPORT ****

The Coalition to Protect Maryland's Children (CPMC) is a consortium of Maryland organizations and individuals formed in 1996 to promote meaningful child welfare reform.

CPMC members listed below SUPPORT the passage of Senate Bill 905, which would require that that the Department of Juvenile Services and the Department of Human Services convene a workgroup of child welfare, juvenile rehabilitation, and juvenile mental health stakeholders to increase accountability for prevention and intervention services delivered to children by the Department of Juvenile Services through evidence-based, research-based, and culturally competent practices.

As Md Essentials for Childhood notes, we now know that the brain's architecture is built over time and from the bottom up, much like a house. Sturdy architecture is built when children have stable, positive experiences and relationships with caring adults at home and in the community. However, when children don't have these experiences, compounding ACEs produce what is now known as "toxic stress," children are vulnerable to a range of health, learning and behavior problems across their lifespan—and we put our future well being as a state at risk.

According to the *National Child Traumatic Stress Network*, over 80% of juvenile justice-involved youth report experiencing trauma, with many having experienced multiple, chronic, and pervasive interpersonal traumas.

Fortunately, research also shows that caring and innovative adults and agencies, guided by trauma-informed policies and staff, can help rewire brains and promote resilience. Taskforces that examine issues of trauma, punishment, race, culture and brain science, such as the one in SB905, are critical for Maryland. See *Essentials for Md Childhood 2020 Legislative Policy Brief*, at <https://mdessentialsforchildhood.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/ACEs-LEGISLATIVE-POLICY-BRIEF-min.pdf>

For these reasons, we request a **FAVORABLE** report for SB905.

**Advocates for Children and Youth | Center for Hope, LifeBridge Health | Child Justice, Inc |
Citizens Review Board for Children | Court Appointed Special Advocates | Family Tree | Md
Chapter of American Acad. of Pediatrics | MD Chap. National Association of Social Workers |
Diana Philip**