



January 26, 2021

The Maryland Judiciary Committee  
House Office Building  
6 Bladen Street  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Dear Chair Clippinger & Vice Chair Atterbeary:

My name is Craig Powell and I am the Founder & CEO of True Heart Children and Family Services. The reason for my correspondence is to submit my support in favor of **HB0093 Public Safety - Local Youth Violence Review Committees**. As the founder of a children and family services agency, I am deeply concerned about the well-being of our young people. As a society, we are continuing to suffer the loss of youth who are tragically dying due to violence. These are young souls born with great purpose who never realize their dreams or never understand that it's okay to even dream to begin with. We understand that there are varied reasons that lead youth to be involved in at-risk behaviors. It's well documented that factors such as poverty, poor education, broken criminal justice system and a lack of community programs helps shape a discouraged outlook that many youth have on life. After having a chance to speak with Delegate Shaneka Henson and reading this bill, I am very optimistic about this systemic process to review the factors that contributed to a youth being involved in violence.

My organization is currently implementing a youth development initiative entitled Don't Die Young. An important element of this initiative is to identify and communicate messages that inform and encourage young people and the general community. I believe that local youth review committees will have the opportunity to take a deeper look into the issues that influence youth violence to not only recommend programmatic and policy changes to better serve youth, but I also believe these committees will discover stories of hopelessness. These stories of hopelessness can be captured and countered with hopeful messages along with pointing youth, their families, the community and policy makers towards services that will help youth discover and sustain hope.

I would like to thank you for this opportunity to submit my support for **HB0093 Public Safety – Local Youth Violence Review Committees**. If there is any additional information that I can provide to offer my support, please do not hesitate to contact me via phone at 410.596.4428 or via email at [craig@trueheartfamily.org](mailto:craig@trueheartfamily.org).

Blessings,

  
Craig Powell  
Founder/CEO