

January 21, 2021

Maryland House of Delegates  
6 Bladen St.  
Annapolis, MD. 21401

**In Support of HB 71: Juvenile Services Education Program and Board; Establishment, Powers, Duties.**

Members of the Maryland House of Delegates, Ways and Means and Judiciary Committees.

As a parent and advocate for persons with disabilities, I can't help but support a bill like this one.

Establishing a juvenile services education board is the right thing to do for children within the juvenile services system. So many children with a variety of challenges, including learning disabilities, end up in juvenile services programs. Yet their needs remain unfulfilled, their challenges to learning remain unresolved, and their potential therefore remains unrealized. These children and youths deserve the same opportunities to receive a quality education, the same as all of our other children all across Maryland.

School – Prison Pipeline: The pipeline that exists between our schools, juvenile services facilities, and our prison system is very real. Many children with a variety of learning and emotional challenges end up here through no fault of their own. And it is not the outcome that we want to see for any of our children.

They are not disposable human beings. They are real children, with real issues and possess real untapped potential. Please let's do our best to help them gain the skills they need to live successful and productive lives today, tomorrow and into the future. Please help to support them so that they can gain the skills and education so that they can reach their full potential.

Please support House Bill 71 and help to bring equity and equality to the juvenile services education system.

Thank you for your time and your consideration of my testimony today.

Mr. Richard Ceruolo  
Parent and advocate for persons living with disabilities.  
Parent Advocacy Consortium