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April 1, 2021

To: The Honorable Luke Clippinger
Chair, Judiciary Committee

From: Office of the Attorney General

Re: SB0497 – Juvenile Services Education Board and Program – Establishment, Powers, and Duties (Support)

The Office of Attorney General submits this written testimony urging the Judiciary Committee to favorably report SB 497, Senator Kelley's bill to establish a new Juvenile Services Education Board in the Department of Juvenile Services (DJS). The board would consist of the Secretary of DJS, Secretary of Higher Education, State Superintendent of Schools, a representative of the Public School Superintendents' Association of Maryland appointed by the Governor with the advice and consent of the Senate, the Attorney General or his designee, and six members appointed by the Governor with the advice and consent of the Senate. The Board will oversee and approve all educational services to juveniles who are in a residential facility beginning July 1, 2022.

As noted in numerous Juvenile Justice Monitoring Unit reports, youth in DJS facilities are not receiving proper educations and teacher retention is abysmal. Senate Bill 497 is a concerted effort to improve the educational opportunities of juveniles in detention.

For the foregoing reasons, we urge a favorable report on SB 497.

cc: Committee Members