



# LEGISLATIVE BLACK CAUCUS OF MARYLAND, INC.

The Maryland House of Delegates, 6 Bladen Street, Room 300, Annapolis, Maryland 21401  
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February 23, 2021

Delegate Anne R. Kaiser  
Chair, Ways and Means

Delegate Alonzo Washington  
Vice Chair, Ways and Means

Dear Chairman Kaiser and Members of the Committee:

The Legislative Black Caucus of Maryland has voted to offer **favorable** support for HB 0700- Education – Disruption of School Activities- Repeal of Prohibition. This bill would repeal the statute that makes "disturbing school activities" a misdemeanor subject to fine of up to \$2500 or incarceration up to 6 months.

The existing law criminalizes normal adolescent behavior and contributes to the school-to-prison pipeline. 82% of students charged for Disturbing School Activities or Personnel in 2020 were BIPOC. The school disturbing statute is duplicative and unnecessary, and if repealed school safety can still be protected with existing criminal statutes.

HB700 would repeal the school disturbing statute, which disproportionately impacts Black students and contributes to the school-to-prison pipeline. Repealing it would reduce the number of Black teens entering the criminal justice system. A 2006 study found that "first-time arrest during high school nearly doubles the odds of high school dropout, while a court appearance nearly quadruples the odds of dropout." So by reducing the number of Black students charged, it will also improve dropout rates. For these reasons, the Legislative Black Caucus of Maryland supports HB 0700.

Respectfully,

*Darryl Barnes*

Darryl Barnes  
Chair, Legislative Black Caucus  
of Maryland

*Melissa Wells*

Melissa Wells  
1<sup>st</sup> Vice Chair, Legislative Black  
Caucus of Maryland