

My name is Thomas B Foreman, III and I have been a Community Case Manager Specialist III in the Frederick Office for eighteen years. I support adding the DJS classifications as outlined in the amendment for House Bill 763.

DJS Community Case Managers are not paper pushers. We are out in the community visiting clients and their families outside of the controlled/structured environment of a DJS office. Visits can take place in a client's home, a community location or at their school. Some of these environments (especially their neighborhood) can be dangerous because many are in high crime areas. The clients we work with/supervise are delinquent youth who have been charged with some misdemeanor crimes (assault second degree), but we also can supervise children who have felony offenses including, but not limited to First-Degree Assault, Robbery, Armed Robbery, drug distribution, or serious sex offenses. We also can have some responsibilities for children who are charged as adults depending on their juvenile status prior to the alleged adult offense occurring.

We usually meet our clients by ourselves: as DJS case managers we are often the "first call" many families, law enforcement officials and/or school officials make when there is a problem or crisis with the family. We ALWAYS answer that call.

Our Department has recognized the dangers of our daily job functions and mandated training on "Situational Awareness" that addresses safety when visiting clients in the community, including home or school, as well as a residential facility.

DJS Case Managers have to be certified through the Maryland Police & Correctional Training Commission yearly to continue working with children and families in this capacity. DJS employees who are providing direct care receive the same certification as law enforcement, parole and probation, and correctional officers.

Please let me offer a few examples of the dangers we face:

1. I have conducted a standard home visit of a client, not knowing that hours later he would be arrested and charged as an adult for alleged attempted First-Degree Murder and First-Degree Assault.
2. I have had to step in-between children and adults to stop physical altercations from erupting.
3. I have been fitted for and provided a bulletproof vest to undertake certain client visits in known violent neighborhoods.

As stated previously community case managers are not paper pushers, but front line workers dealing with children and families with delinquency issues and criminal histories, providing direct services in their community.

I thank the committee for the opportunity to share with you today, and ask a favorable report of House Bill 763 with amendments.