

**HB 146: Education – Reportable Offenses and Student Discipline – Alterations**  
**FAVORABLE**

Greetings members of the Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee,

My name is Onyinye Alheri and I am an advocate from Baltimore's 40th district. I am writing to ask that you vote in favor of HB 146 to alter the definition of "reportable offense" to not include offenses that occurred on school premises or at school-sponsored events. This bill would significantly limit the offenses that can be reported as "crimes of violence" and the amount of offenses for which youth are charged as adults. It would also make reporting optional rather than mandatory, effectively **reducing the number of students fed into the school-to-prison pipeline.**

Here are a few of the reasons why I urge you to support the bill:

- All students deserve the opportunity to learn, regardless of their circumstances outside of school
- Black, brown, poor and queer students are disproportionately harmed by the criminal legal system, inside and outside of school walls
- Research demonstrates the adverse impact of suspensions, expulsions, and removals from school for reportable offenses on students; most notably being disconnected from their education and social networks
- Students (in the process of) facing removal deserve legal counsel

As a former student of Maryland public schools, I am all too familiar with the negative impact that carceral logic plays on the lives of children, especially in the Baltimore City public school. Criminal charges are not the solution for harm in schools. Preventative measures need to be taken to address the holistic needs of students, *before* harm occurs. This includes directing funds to meet students' full needs including adequate nutrition, healthy relationships with caretakers/parents, employment opportunities and out-of-school activities, among others.

Thank you, Delegate Moon, for your consistent **commitment to justice beyond a carceral logic**, and Delegate Atterbeary for your support. I urge the committee to vote in favor of HB146.

Best,

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