

2022 SB522 - Parks Child Safe Zone Program - Equit

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Position: FAV



March 1, 2022 – Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee
SB522 – State and Local Parks – Child Safe Zone Program – Establishment (Equitable Access to Safe Parks Act)
Testimony of Adam Rosenberg, Esq., Executive Director, Center for Hope
Position: **SUPPORT**

I am writing to **SUPPORT** SB522 - State and Local Parks – Child Safe Zone Program – Establishment (Equitable Access to Safe Parks Act). LifeBridge Health is a regional health system comprising Sinai Hospital of Baltimore, an independent academic medical center; Levindale Geriatric Center and Hospital in Baltimore; Northwest Hospital, a community hospital in Baltimore County; Carroll Hospital, a sole community hospital in Carroll County, and; Grace Medical Center in Baltimore (formerly Bon Secours Hospital).

Community Need: Every three years, hospitals engage in a profound community engagement process to complete their Community Health Needs Assessments as prescribed by the Affordable Care Act. In three triennial assessments completed by LifeBridge Health hospitals, our communities cited violence as a key concern related to their health outcomes.¹ In response, we enhanced violence-related programming, addressing all forms of violence, both community and interpersonal in nature. The Center for Hope – our center of excellence for violence intervention - launched the Red Desk Project to raise awareness and address childhood homicide in Baltimore.² One hundred twelve desks placed on the grounds of Sinai Hospital represent each child victim of homicide over the last 6 years. Addressing child homicide, and by extension the needs of children exposed to violence in any form, will reduce such exposures and the resulting trauma that disrupts brain development and increases the risk of serious illness, psychological issues, and dangerous behavior later in life, including future acts of violence. Indeed, many child fatalities reviewed by the Baltimore City Child Fatality Review Team had prior significant exposures to violence.³

All of Maryland’s parks experienced increased usage and became safe spaces of refuge and recreation for all during the COVID pandemic. Unfortunately, with spikes in homicide and violence throughout the Baltimore region as well as other areas of the state, we have unfortunately experienced violence in and around parks. An egregious example of such violence was the recent murder of Baltimore Police officer Keona Holley, who was shot at Curtis Bay Park, turning that safe space into a crime scene.⁴ In November 2021, 13 year old Maliyah Turner was shot to death across from Pauline Fauntleroy Park.⁵ These communal spaces lose their sanctity of safety when they are associated with murder and crime – it is unjust for children to play amongst crime scenes and spaces associated with violence, and thus another safe space is lost.

Health and Social Impact: Being outdoors has positive impacts on a person’s mental and physical health. Environmental exposures such as green space can improve health equity by mitigating hazardous exposures and providing other health-protective effects. Exposure to urban nature compared to urban built environments improved multiple measures of cognitive function or development, including attention or attentional capacity and working memory. Further, “...racially/ethnically minoritized people are disproportionately exposed to environmental hazards

¹ LifeBridge Health. Population Health. (2021). <https://www.lifebridgehealth.org/Main/PopulationHealth.aspx>

² LifeBridge Health. Red Desk Project | Center For Hope. (2021) <https://www.lifebridgehealth.org/CenterForHope/RedDesk.aspx> & <https://baltimore.cbslocal.com/2021/04/29/red-desk-project-at-sinai-hospital-to-bring-awareness-to-child-crime-in-city/>

³ Baltimore City Health Department, Child Fatalities in Baltimore City 2016-2020: Recommendations for Prevention. Dec 1, 2021 <https://health.baltimorecity.gov/sites/default/files/2021%20Baltimore%20City%20CFR%205-Year%20Report.pdf>

⁴ <https://www.baltimoresun.com/news/crime/bs-md-ci-cr-officer-shot-curtis-bay-20211216-3uokzv6xmje25cdxmy4mtvbtqp-story.html>

⁵ <https://www.baltimoresun.com/news/crime/bs-md-ci-cr-shooting-east-baltimore-midway-20211118-dyioarvic5h4pig46fq4todx44-story.html>

(e.g., air pollution) and suffer from health disparities linked to exposure to such hazards (e.g., lung disease), and those health disparities can be considered as health inequities.”⁶

It is in the best interest of children, their families, and all Marylanders for the State to encourage the safe and healthy utilization of parks on a regular basis. Children and families are entitled to an expectation of safety in public spaces such as parks and recreation centers. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s landmark Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) study, children who witness violence are more likely to suffer poor health and social impacts than their counterparts who do not, and more likely to perpetrate later in life.⁷

When a child is a direct victim of violence, the system knows how to respond – report, treat, support, etc., - but for a child exposed to violence as a witness or survivor, but not directly harmed, the impact may not be easily identified.

Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED):^{8,9} Enhancing access to safe public parks fosters community health as well as community and economic development. In addition to prominently placed signage, improvements suggested in the principles of CPTED include enhanced lighting, and improved access and security. Basic guiding principles to safety in parks include access control (gates, fencing, furniture placement), territorial reinforcement (signs, trees, paving), natural surveillance (on-site surveillance during programming and visibility from roadways), and maintenance (making timely repairs to broken equipment, painting over graffiti, etc). Historically, parks and recreation areas were placed in areas with limited opportunities for visibility, as residents did not want to be disturbed by children playing or have their line of sight interrupted by playgrounds, so parks were located in isolated areas, away from housing, and then surrounded with trees and shrubs. This trend created an environment ripe for crime and disruptive behaviors, and parks were eventually perceived as unsafe places. As CPTED principles have been implemented in parks and other open recreational spaces, these spaces have become more inviting and people feel safer.

Community and Economic Development: Identification of parks as Child Safe Zones and widespread infrastructure improvements will communicate to the public that parks are intended to serve as safe community gathering spaces and thereby provide safe havens for children. Well maintained parks with the added designation of Child Safe Zones foster collaboration, community building, and can be a catalyst for positive change in a neighborhood. Such investments make sense from an economic development perspective as well, as green space is one among many amenities – sought after by individuals and families as they contemplate where to settle and purchase homes.

For all of the above-mentioned reasons, we urge a **FAVORABLE** report on SB522.

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⁶ Kondo, M. C., Fleur, J. M., McKeon, T., & Branas, C. C. (2018). Urban Green Space and Its Impact on Human Health. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 15 (3)(445). <https://doi.org/www.mdpi.com/journal/ijerph>

⁷ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2021, April 2). *Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)*. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/aces/index.html>

⁸ ⁵Koontz, D. W. (2017). *Design Approaches to CPTED in Natural Area Parks Case Study: Lower Kinnear Park*. The International Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design Association. Retrieved February 7, 2022, from https://botanicgardens.uw.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/7/2016/11/2017_CPTED-Lower-Kinnear.pdf

⁹ <https://www.nrpa.org/parks-recreation-magazine/2016/march/using-design-to-reduce-crime/>

2022 SB522 Parks Child Safe Zone Act. Testimony of

Uploaded by: Arthur Hushen

Position: FAV



National Institute of Crime Prevention

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March 1, 2022 – Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee

SB522 – State and Local Parks – Child Safe Zone Program – Testimony of Art Hushen, President, National Institute of Crime Prevention.

Position: LETTER OF SUPPORT

I am writing to **SUPPORT** SB522 - State and Local Parks – Child Safe Zone Program – Establishment (Equitable Access to Safe Parks Act).

The National Institute of Crime Prevention is a global training company specializing in Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design. (CPTED) Starting in 1999, the NICP began the process of introducing the concepts and strategies of CPTED nationally, focusing on those practitioners who were applying them in the field. As more professionals entered the field, we realized the importance of a standard for professional excellence. After many years of review, curriculum development, and input from a variety of associations and training groups, we developed the CPTED Professional Designation, which has become the standard of training for all CPTED Practitioners.

The CPTED premise is *“The proper design and effective use of the built environment can lead to a reduction in the fear of and incidence of crime and an improvement in the quality of life.”*

CPTED is a philosophy of crime prevention that utilizes a multidisciplinary approach to the built environment that is intended to deter criminal behavior, foster improved quality of life, assist in achieving community-policing goals, and facilitate self-policing by the community. CPTED draws on passive strategies incorporated into the normal planning, design, and management of the built environment. Human-scaled, pedestrian-oriented environments allow for face-to-face social interaction, relationship building, the self-management of behaviors and community accountability.

A relationship-based community park can help encourage and maintain community self-policing efforts to reduce the need for City resources and police intervention in places that may be sensitive to a police presence or have limited police presence.

The NICP has conducted and hosted training for a variety of professional groups, city governments, and non-profit organizations. One of our programs that directly relates to the Child Safe Zone Program, is our CPTED and Parks. Having worked with many cities and conducting hundreds of CPTED assessments of parks, we have an excellent understanding of park use, design, and safety.

Parks are a vital component of community well being. Many neighborhoods are dependent on parks as community centers, allowing them a place to socialize with other community members. For many, parks provide the only form of recreation as part of a healthy lifestyle. Through the use of parks and as part of social engagement, young people learn to develop the social skills they need as they transition into adulthood. Conflict resolution, self-esteem, social problem solving, emotional self-awareness, and teamwork, to name a few. For that to occur, families and children **must feel safe** while using the park. It must be inviting, safe, and provide programs that are engaging to all. These elements can be provided as part of a CPTED program. With input from the community, park safety becomes a community initiative.

For the above listed reasons, the NICP supports SB522.

Thank you,
Art Hushen, President
National Institute of Crime Prevention

SB0522 - 3.1.22 -- State and Local Parks Child Sa

Uploaded by: Donald Fry

Position: FAV



POSITION STATEMENT

**TESTIMONY PRESENTED TO THE SENATE EDUCATION, HEALTH,
AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE**

**SENATE BILL 522 – STATE AND LOCAL PARKS – CHILD SAFE ZONE PROGRAM –
ESTABLISHMENT (EQUITABLE ACCESS TO SAFE PARKS ACT)**

Sponsor – Senators Hettleman and Elfreth

March 1, 2022

**DONALD C. FRY
PRESIDENT & CEO
GREATER BALTIMORE COMMITTEE**

Position: Support

Senate Bill 522 creates the Child Safe Zone Program in the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to improve public safety at State and local parks, as well as a fund to finance the program. The funds to improve safety at state and local parks through environmental design components such as enhanced lighting, landscaping, and security cameras. The funds can also be used to pay for increased staffing, including security.

Environmental design improvements can include prominently placed signage, enhanced lighting, and improved access and security. The basic guiding principles to safety in parks include access control (gates, fencing, furniture placement), territorial reinforcement (signs, trees, paving), natural surveillance (on-site surveillance during programming and visibility from roadways), and maintenance (making timely repairs to broken equipment, painting over graffiti, etc.)

The level of violence in the state, and in particular Baltimore City, is unacceptable and substantive changes are required to improve public safety and ensure economic vitality and competitiveness. For these reasons, improving public safety has been identified by the Greater Baltimore Committee (GBC) as a key economic development and public safety issue that needs to be urgently addressed.

Implementing the Child Safe Zone program will signal that the park has been designed to create a safer space for children and families. The GBC supports using environmental design to enhance access to safe public parks as a community and economic development tool. Safer parks make a community more inviting and people and businesses are more likely to locate in a jurisdiction with safe parks.

The GBC has recommended a two-pronged approach to reduce violent crime. The first prong addresses crime control through enhanced public safety programs focused on repeat violent offenders and better coordination among law enforcement agencies. The second prong - crime prevention - must be instituted simultaneously with crime control efforts. It is critically important to address the root societal causes of crime with programs that address poverty, lack of employment, need for job training programs, and an increase in after-school programs, etc. The GBC backs these types of initiatives with the same weight afforded crime control strategies.

Senate Bill 522 is consistent with this two-pronged approach by helping to create safer community spaces for children, and making parks less attractive to those committing violent crime.

For these reasons, the Greater Baltimore Committee urges a favorable report on Senate Bill 522.

GREATER BALTIMORE COMMITTEE

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The Greater Baltimore Committee (GBC) is a non-partisan, independent, regional business advocacy organization comprised of hundreds of businesses -- large, medium and small -- educational institutions, nonprofit organizations and foundations located in Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Carroll, Harford, and Howard counties as well as Baltimore City. The GBC is a 67-year-old, private-sector membership organization with a rich legacy of working with government to find solutions to problems that negatively affect our competitiveness and viability.

2022 SB522 - Parks Child Safe Zone Act. Testimony o

Uploaded by: Frank Lane

Position: FAV



PARKS & PEOPLE

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Dr. Franklin Lance

March 1, 2022

Senate Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee

SB522 – State and Local Parks – Child Safe Zone Program – Establishment (Equitable Access to Safe Parks Act)

Testimony of Franklin Lance

Position: **SUPPORT**

I am writing to SUPPORT SB522 - State and Local Parks – Child Safe Zone Program – Establishment (Equitable Access to Safe Parks Act). Parks & People is a 38-year-old Baltimore City based nonprofit focused on improving Baltimore through state-of-the-art green spaces, parks, and playgrounds. Most directly, we focus on the city's black butterfly neighborhoods and seek to remove the decades of blight and disenfranchisement by replacing vacant and blighted buildings with community green spaces, active parks, and playgrounds as a means of delivering hope and healing. Since 2016, Parks & People has transformed over 30 acres of Baltimore into these spaces and invested over \$7M into formerly ignored communities.

Community Need: A major asset of a healthy community is resident and patron access to a park. More directly, the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) uses a metric that everyone should be within a ten-minute walk (.25 mile) of a community green space or park. Over the years of Baltimore's explosive population growth (circa 1890 – 1950), such green space was often sacrificed in favor of multi-dwelling housing and motor vehicle ingress and egress into the city. With Baltimore's 70-year population decline (1950 – 2020), Baltimore faces a housing surplus for approximately 365,000 who no longer call Baltimore City home. Unfortunately, most of these vacant properties are in the black butterfly communities in which residents had not the means/influence to address the problem, and state/city policies determined these communities expendable.

In response, Parks & People made a strategic decision in 2016 to focus on this problem and build state-of-the-art green spaces in these communities. We led a \$1.3M improvement of Henrietta Lacks Park. We built parks in Easterwood, Darley, Franklinton Square, Johnston Square and Upton. We built playgrounds at Liberty and Hamilton Elementary Schools, with plans to do likewise at Cecil and Johnston Square. These spaces are harbingers of hope and can be therapeutic places for otherwise traumatized communities.

Safety: At Parks & People, we assert these communities deserve quality places at which kids can play, adults can gather, and all can be safe. As we know from Maslow's hierarchy of needs, people must feel safe in order to grow into their full potential. Likewise, these green spaces and parks must be safe places for all to reach their full potential of community gathering places. This bill is a start in the direction of making it known that these spaces must be safe. I purposely said "start" as I assert the bill does not go far enough by being absent of any enforcement measures.



To its credit, the bill seeks to make parks a “Child Safe Zone.” This is a start I can and do support. The signage and lighting sends a message of safety. Maybe the message is not as strong, as I would like, but it is a message of safety nonetheless.

Therefore, on behalf of Parks & People, Inc., I request you give SB522 a FAVORABLE report.

Contact: Dr. Franklin Lance
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410.804.4924

2022 SB522 - Parks Child Safe Zone Program - Equit

Uploaded by: Jeffrey Steger

Position: FAV



Public Safety and Security Specialists

SB522 – Parks – Child Safe Zone program – Equitable Access to Safe Parks Act
Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee – March 1, 2022
Testimony of Jeffrey J. Steger, Jeffrey Steger and Associates, Public Safety Consultants
Position: **SUPPORT**

I write in support of SB522 – Child Safe Zone Program – Providing Equitable Access to Safe Parks Act. I am retired from the Arlington County Virginia Police Department. I have trained thousands of Police Officers and community members in the concepts of **Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED)** and have conducted hundreds of safety and security assessments of a variety of properties for safety and security, including parks and recreation areas. In fact, I conducted the assessment of the Trolley Trail that travels from College Park, MD to Washington, DC, and I recognize public safety as a key element of the redevelopment of communities and community policing. Indeed, I am acutely aware of the impact of violence and crime on our communities, and on the health outcomes of residents of these communities.

This bill will help communicate in a strong way that parks are a safe place for children and families to congregate, creating community interaction and providing a respite from the pressures of daily life. And for children who are exposed to violence of any kind in their lives, having a place where they can play safely and engage socially is critical to their recovery and happiness. As the need for parks, recreation areas, open space, green space and linear trails has increased over the past few years, so too has there been an increase in the need for the safety and security of those spaces. Law enforcement is not the only answer and designing parks with safety and security in mind is more cost effective than simply adding manpower.

Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design. The concept of CPTED (pronounced “cep- ted”)– Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design is based upon the belief that “the proper design and effective use of the built environment can lead to a reduction in the fear and incidence of crime and an improvement in the quality of life”. It is a cost effective concept that

can be applied to any park which will decrease the opportunity for crime and increase the sense of safety and security for legitimate users.

Every agency involved in park design and management should have someone trained in the concepts of CPTED to lend that experience and expertise to any new development that is occurring within a jurisdiction. That person should be part of the plans review process and their input should have the same weight and value as the fire inspector, or the electrical inspector. It is much easier and cost effective to build any facility with these concepts in mind, prior to the construction, than to come back, at a later time, and re-construct for safety and security.

The use of CPTED sends a message to the users of any facility that they are moving from an open, uncontrolled space (street, sidewalk) to a more controlled environment. This would include parks, where there is a different expectation of behavior. CPTED gives the user the feeling that they are moving from that open space, where any manner of behavior is acceptable, to a private space where there is a much different expectation of behavior with control, rules and regulations, and when needed, enforcement. The feeling that is trying to be created is that users' actions and behavior are noticed, that someone is in charge of the property, and that there is some control, management, and supervision, over the property, that not any kind of behavior is acceptable.

What Are Basic Concepts of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design? CPTED's basic concepts are **Access Control, Natural Surveillance, Territoriality and Maintenance**. It should be noted that lighting in a park can be controversial. If the park is lit at night, the locality is implying that the park is open and safe. If there is not any lighting and the posted hours of operation are from dusk until dawn, the locality is saying that the park is closed and should not be accessed at night. This may necessitate gates, locks, and personnel to lock the parks at night. The entrance to the park should be clearly marked and celebrated so that users know where the entrance is located. Note that if the park is fenced, there must be well marked points of egress in the event of an emergency.

Parking lots, picnic areas, trailheads – so-called “day use” areas - and other facilities used at night should be located near streets and other activity areas that are clearly observable by other legitimate users. Citizens should be encouraged to report suspicious activity and the park should be part of the routine patrol of the assigned law enforcement officer.

Restrooms are high on the amenity list of facilities for legitimate users. Restrooms should be located in high traffic areas where there is an abundance of natural surveillance. Restrooms should be constructed of graffiti resistant materials. Fixtures should be constructed of stainless

steel, not porcelain. Restrooms should be single occupancy and not gender specific. Doors should have heavy duty locking devices and secured every evening at a specific hour. Water, air dryers, and soap dispensers should be automatic, motion activated to minimize trash and vandalism – activities which could make users feel that an area is not property valued and overseen.

Equipment should be kept in good repair, grounds well maintained, the canopy of trees should be 6 to 8 feet from the ground to allow unobstructed sight lines, and no gathering concealed from the public's view. Graffiti should be removed immediately. Property boundaries should be clearly marked and fencing in good repair. Placement of an emergency call box, within the confines of the park, may be beneficial to aid citizens who wish to report suspicious activity. Maintenance workers should be uniformed with the name of the employee pinned or stitched on the shirt and the name of the organization clearly visible. Rules for the park must be clearly posted in more than one language.

Engaging the Community. Local businesses and civic organizations should be encouraged to “adopt a park”. This concept provides additional eyes and ears to help control the public space. Implementing the concepts of CPTED will help achieve a goal of this bill to help communicate in a strong way that parks are a safe place for children and families to congregate, creating community interaction and providing a respite from the pressures of daily life. And for children who are exposed to violence of any kind in their lives, having a place where they can play safely and engage socially.

I request that you give SB522 a FAVORABLE report.

Contact: Martha D. Nathanson, Esq., Vice President, Government Relations & Community Development, LifeBridge Health
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BaltimoreCounty_FAV_SB0522.pdf

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JOHN A. OLSZEWSKI, JR.
County Executive

JOEL N. BELLER
Acting Director of Government Affairs

JOSHUA M. GREENBERG
Associate Director of Government Affairs

MIA R. GOGEL
Associate Director of Government Affairs

BILL NO.: Senate Bill 522

TITLE: State and Local Parks - Child Safe Zone Program - Establishment (Equitable Access to Safe Parks Act)

SPONSOR: Senator Hettleman

COMMITTEE: Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

POSITION: **SUPPORT**

DATE: March 1, 2022

Baltimore County **SUPPORTS** Senate Bill 522– State and Local Parks - Child Safe Zone Program - Establishment (Equitable Access to Safe Parks Act). This legislation provides resources to improve public safety at parks throughout the State.

Local and State parks have received a record amount of visitors over the last two years. In response growing popularity Baltimore County Executive Johnny Olszewski has continued to invest in outdoor spaces so that facilities can meet growing demand while maintaining accessibility for all communities. The increased use of Maryland’s parks and number of new outdoor facilities must be met with additional safety improvements to ensure that all parks are safe for visitors.

Senate Bill 522 establishes the Child Safety Zone program for the safety of children and families using Maryland’s public parks. This program would provide funding for infrastructure improvements such as enhanced lighting, security cameras, trash receptacles and other safety improvements, and for increased safety personnel for State and local parks. As a parent, County Executive Olszewski understands the need to know that children are being offered the safest possible environment to grow and engage in recreational outdoor activities. As more families utilize the myriad parks the State has to offer, it is critical to ensure that these parks meet the standards Maryland’s children deserve.

Accordingly, Baltimore County requests a **FAVORABLE** report on SB 522. For more information, please contact Joel Beller, Acting Director of Government Affairs at jbeller@baltimorecountymd.gov.

SB 522_FAV_MML.pdf

Uploaded by: Justin Fiore

Position: FAV



Maryland Municipal League

The Association of Maryland's Cities and Towns

TESTIMONY

March 1, 2022

Committee: Senate Education, Health & Environmental Affairs

Bill: SB 522 – State and Local Parks – Child Safe Zone Program – Establishment (Equitable Access to Safe Parks Act)

Position: Support

Reason for Position:

The Maryland Municipal League supports SB 522 which would establish the Child Safe Zone Program in the Department of Natural Resources to assist local jurisdictions in designating Child Safe Zones and provide funding for capital and operating expenses.

Municipal parks are a key attraction and essential feature of many cities and towns in Maryland. Ensuring the safety of those who visit and providing peace of mind is something our members are always striving for and having more funds available would be very welcome.

Therefore, MML respectfully requests that this Committee provide SB 522 with a favorable report.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

Scott A. Hancock	Executive Director
Angelica Bailey	Director, Government Relations
Bill Jorch	Director, Research and Policy Analysis
Justin Fiore	Manager, Government Relations

1212 West Street, Annapolis, Maryland 21401

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2022 SB522 - Parks Child Safe Zone Program - Equit

Uploaded by: Larry Schugam

Position: FAV



March 1, 2022

The Honorable Paul Pinsky
Chair, Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee
2 West Mills Senate Office Building
11 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Chair Pinsky,

The Northwest Baltimore Partnership (NWBP) fully supports SB522 – Child Safe Zone Program – Providing Equitable Access to Safe Parks. NWBP recognizes public safety as a key element of the redevelopment of our community. Indeed, we are acutely aware of the impact of violence and crime on our communities.

This bill will help communicate in a strong way that parks are a safe place for children and families to congregate, creating community interaction and providing a respite from the pressures of daily life. And for children who are exposed to violence of any kind in their lives, having a place where they can play safely and engage socially is critical to their recovery and happiness.

In addition to seeing signs that the park is a “Child Safe Zone,” park users will also benefit from seeing improvements that deter violence and crime. Better lighting and access control, creative landscaping, enhanced security measures and increased staffing will enhance public safety in these settings and encourage even more people to utilize these natural resources.

We request that you give SB522 a FAVORABLE report.

Best Regards,

Northwest Baltimore Partnership

cc: Senator Cheryl Kagan

NWBP Steering Committee Members:

@TheHouse - Pastor Troy Randall
Baltimore City Department of Planning - Mikah Zaslou
Baltimore County Community Planning - Ngone Seye Diop
Baltimore County Executive’s Office of Community Engagement - Michelle Bernstein
CHAI - Lisa Budlow
Cylburn Arboretum Friends - Patricia Foster

Fulton Bank - Devorah Livni
LifeBridge Health - Martha Nathanson
Manna Bible Baptist Church - Pastor Michael A. Gaines, Sr.
Park Heights Renaissance - Yolanda Jiggetts
Greater Baltimore Chamber of Commerce - Barry Nabozny
PNC Bank - Austin Merritt

2022 SB522 - Parks Child Safe Zone Program - Equit

Uploaded by: LeVar Michael

Position: FAV



The Honorable Cheryl Kagan
2 West Miller Senate Office Building
11 Bladen Street
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Dear Chair Kagan,

I am writing in support of SB522 – Child Safe Zone Program – Establishment (Equitable Access to Safe Parks Act). As the nation’s largest Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI), LISC has a 40+ year track record of delivering social and financial impact through technical assistance and financing in 38 cities and 2,200 rural counties. Together with residents and partners, LISC forges resilient and inclusive communities of opportunity across America.

LISC recognizes that public safety policy must be grounded in comprehensive and equitable approaches that empower communities and promote healthy redevelopment. In my experience implementing violence reduction efforts, it is clear that there is a direct correlation between the physical environment and community safety. As an example, the research of Dr. Charles Branas at Columbia University links the greening of vacant lots in Philadelphia, PA with consistent reductions in gun assaults and reductions in vandalism.

People need well-maintained buildings and outdoor spaces to feel safe. We know that poorly maintained parks and public spaces have a major impact on community health outcomes. Blighted and vacant properties, including local parks, attract crime and create other public health concerns that undermine the quality of life of residents. In addition to doing a disservice to residents, it also discourages critical investments in these areas. In order to enhance safety, improve health outcomes, and encourage equitable development LISC recognizes that a comprehensive evidence-based approach is the best path forward.

In my role, I often refer to the [Inclusive Healthy Places Framework](#) developed by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the Gehl Institute. The framework provides guidance to municipal leaders, policymakers, and local partners on how to design safe, equitable, and healthy places. As highlighted in the report, the physical and social characteristics of our environments influence our ability to access and benefit from safe streets, parks, quality transportation and meaningful public engagement. Cared-for public spaces like parks go a

long way in garnering stronger social cohesion and collective efficacy by providing a safe place for positive community interaction.

By supporting the Child Safe Zones, it is my hope that this bill will help communicate that parks need to be safe spaces for children and families to gather and create community bonds.

In addition to seeing signs placed in prominent locations of the park showing that the park is a “Child Safe Zone,” park users will also benefit from seeing improvement to parks that deter violence and crime.

On behalf of LISC, and the communities we serve, I request that you give SB522 a FAVORABLE report.

LeVar Michael

LeVar Michael, Senior Program Officer

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SB522 -Parks Child Safe Zone Act - Equitable Acces

Uploaded by: Patricia Foster

Position: FAV



March 1, 2022

The Honorable Paul Pinsky
2 West Miller Senate Office Building
11 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Chair Pinsky

I am writing in support of SB522– Child Safe Zone Program – Providing Equitable Access to Safe Parks. As a leader in Cylburn Arboretum Friends, Inc., located in Central Park Heights, I recognize public safety as a key element of the redevelopment of our community. Indeed, I am acutely aware of the impact of violence and crime on our communities.

This bill will help communicate in a strong way that parks are a safe place for children and families to congregate, creating community interaction and providing a respite from the pressures of daily life. And for children who are exposed to violence of any kind in their lives, having a place where they can play safely and engage socially is critical to their recovery and happiness.

Our programming at the Arboretum reflects a core mission: To awaken curiosity in children and to embrace the peace and beauty that being in Nature can bring. In addition to seeing signs that that the park is a “Child Safe Zone,” park users will also benefit from seeing improvement to parks that deter violence and crime. Better lighting and access control, creative landscaping, enhanced security measures and increased staffing will enhance public safety in these settings and encourage even more people to utilize these natural resources.

I request that you give SB522 a FAVORABLE report.

Sincerely,

Patricia Foster
Executive Director
Cylburn Arboretum Friends

2022 SB22 Parks Child Safe Zone Act - Equitable Ac

Uploaded by: Randy Atlas

Position: FAV



ATLAS SAFETY & SECURITY DESIGN, INC.

March 1, 2022

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee

SB522 – State and Local Parks – Child Safe Zone Program – Establishment (Equitable Access to Safe Parks Act)

Testimony of Randy Atlas Ph.D., FAIA, CPP, CPTED

Position: SUPPORT

I am writing to SUPPORT SB522 - State and Local Parks – Child Safe Zone Program – Establishment (Equitable Access to Safe Parks Act).

I reviewed the SB522 Child Safe Zone Program. I am America's only architect / criminologist, and certified as an advanced CPTED practitioner and trainer through the International CPTED Association. I received my Doctorate of Criminology from Florida State University, a Masters in Architecture from the University of Illinois, and a Bachelor of Criminal Justice degree from University of South Florida, and Bachelor's of Architecture from the University of Florida. I am president of Atlas Safety & Security Design Inc., based in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. I am a registered architect in Florida, nationally accredited with National Council Architectural Registration Board (N.C.A.R.B.), and a Fellow of the American Institute of Architects. I am a Certified Protection Professional (CPP) from the ASIS International, and an appointed member of the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) Premises Security Committee, which developed the new NFPA 730/ 731 premises security standards and guidelines. I am a member of the Florida Design Out Crime network, a Board member of the International CPTED Association (ICA), a member of the International Society of Crime Prevention Practitioners, and the International Association of Counterterrorism and Security Professionals, and member of the International Association of Professional Security Consultants. I am an internationally recognized trainer and author on Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED). I authored the book, "21st Century Security and CPTED," in 2008, and the 2nd Edition in 2013. I teach an on-line E Learning CPTED Certified Practitioners course at www.cpted-security.com that is certified by the International CPTED Association.

The Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) methodology is directly applicable to the planning, design, and use of parks, green spaces, and recreational areas. Proper safe park design requires an appreciation of who, why, what, where, when, and how the park will operate in order to deter crime and acts of incivility. Why is the park going to be needed and by whom? What is the mission or purpose of the park, and what are the activities that are allowed and encouraged? Who are the legitimate users of the park? Where is the park located so it can encourage maximum use and achieve maximum natural surveillance? When is the park available for use? How will the park achieve the design goals according to the mission statement and risk assessment? These simple questions launch the CPTED risk assessment process and help developers, designers, and government entities understand how to better design parks. They provide the direction and tone that a safe park design should take.

A crime prevention through environmental design (CPTED) risk assessment includes a thorough physical survey of the any Park project by evaluating the drawings and site for each of the basic CPTED strategies and approaches. Basic CPTED strategies include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Natural Surveillance – The placement of physical features that maximize visibility. This can be achieved by examining the physical structure of the pool and the surrounding grounds, including shrubbery, lighting, video, surveillance, window placement, fencing, and other types of physical features.
2. Mechanical (Video) Surveillance – Using the strategic placement of video surveillance equipment for maximum benefit, including paying attention to outdoor security concerns in the parking lot and entrance.
3. Access Control Management – The use of signs, well-marked entrances and exits, and landscaping to guide people and direct the flow of people. Consider restrictions of access to various areas using real or symbolic barriers. Additionally, examine the landscaping and areas to reduce access to unsupervised locations on the pool facility. Finally, evaluate the current process used to funnel access to the point of entry.
4. Territorial Reinforcement – Evaluate the risk areas for clear delineations of space, expressions of pride or ownership, and the creation of a welcoming environment. Determine the need to create or extend a “sphere of influence” with the use of physical designs, landscaping, and signage. Evaluate if public areas are clearly distinguished from private ones.
5. Order Maintenance – Evaluation of the staff’s responsiveness to minor unacceptable acts and provide recommendations for measures that can be implemented that clearly state acceptable behaviors.
6. Physical Maintenance – Assessing the repair and general upkeep of the space. Recommendations for incorporating CPTED based maintenance into the existing maintenance plan to help preserve property value and make the pool and support spaces a safer place. For example, evaluate internal spaces for graffiti, lighting, and stairways.

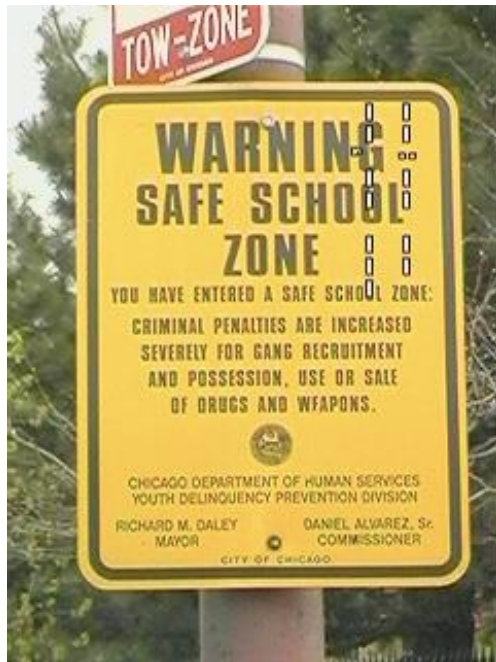
CPTED principles, performance standards, and strategies are used during project development review to identify and incorporate those design features which reduce opportunities for criminal activity to occur. The effectiveness of CPTED is based on the fact that criminals make rational choices about their targets. Unfortunately, targets in parks include children. Through use of CPTED principles, the built environment can be designed and managed to ensure:

- (1) The greater the risk of illegitimate users being seen, challenged, or caught; the less likely they are to commit a crime;
- (2) The greater the effort required to commit crime and incivilities the less likely opportunistic criminals are to commit a crime;
- (3) The lesser the actual or perceived rewards, the less likely persons are to commit a crime;
- (4) Opportunities for criminal activity are minimized.

The planning and design of parks and recreational spaces include those special areas that communities use to relax and play. Many park designs encourage a wide range of activities and

attract a wide range of users. Urban designers and landscape architects create green spaces and parks with varied purposes and, therefore, parks are a study of scale.

When designed well and widely used, parks help create a sense of community. Parks bring people together and add cultural richness to the community. Parks are a source of recreation, which can create great spaces for people to use. As cities undergo renovation and growth, there is a direction to add open spaces, riverwalk trails, bike trails, skateboard parks, and simple green spaces.



Safe zones for children have precedent in the proximity to schools, and businesses that create a safe place for a child in distress to seek shelter and assistance.

When is a park viewed as safe, fun, and successful? As a Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) practitioner, I often have to evaluate the green spaces and parks that are included in and around multifamily housing developments, and commercial properties. I am often left with many unanswered questions about park design. For example, many parks experience crime, vandalism, graffiti, drug use, and drug dealing. These types of activities are a conflict of use and of users. Playgrounds for infants or small children are often placed in leftover spaces at the end of a site or an apartment building. Locating swings and sandboxes in an area that has little or no natural surveillance can invite older kids who may use the play areas, inappropriately. One common result I see is play areas or parks being abandoned or used by undesired persons. When I see parks, green spaces, and play areas in isolated areas, I wonder: what was the developer, planner, or architect thinking? Was that design decision because parks are a non-income-producing real estate, and go in the *leftover* spaces? Was there any consideration of how the parks were going to be used and by whom? In fact, too often I witness such incongruent recreational activities linked together in the abandoned leftover spaces on a site.

We must learn to better design parks, green spaces, trails, and outdoor recreational spaces with CPTED principles. Most parks in urban locations need to incorporate territoriality to clearly define what is considered public property and what the park is. Too often, I observe behavior reflecting a public misunderstanding that parks and green spaces are *no-man's land* (*no-persons land*). Some think park space is fair game for all kinds of inappropriate or illegal behavior. In fact,

parks are owned property by the federal, state, or local government entity, or the private sector. Because those groups control and then assign someone to maintain the park, ground rules can be set regarding proper legal legitimate usage.

CPTED access control decisions will impact where the most desired, observed, and desired use areas are located. Entrances should be well defined and celebrated with signage, ground rules, and lighting. Fencing should be used along the perimeter of the property where it is reasonable and appropriate, as determined by the risk threat assessment.

Parks are generally areas that combine green spaces with defined areas for recreation, seating, or special use. Where natural foliage and plantings are dense, it is unreasonable and impractical to prune them for natural surveillance. In fact, the dense undercover can act as a natural barrier and does not invite normal pedestrian use. Sidewalks and trails invite use by intended and unintended users; therefore, wherever possible, natural surveillance and unobstructed sightlines is desired adjacent to the paths of mobility.

In order to get the desired outcome of legitimate activities in the parks, it is important to have basic rules of behavior posted in easy to observe locations. CPTED uses the principle of inducement of shame, and removing the excuses, for inappropriate behavior. Posted ground rules are essential to accomplish that goal. Signage rules can make transgressors think twice by inducing shame, and removing excuses for inappropriate behavior, especially regarding vulnerable children. The signage should state the hours of usage, what types of activities are allowed and not allowed, and who enforces the rules, and the consequences.

The CPTED perspective on the challenge of crime and children vulnerability, is fairly straightforward: if you build it, they will come! The park designer, park rangers, or police agency must diagnose the risks clearly. Accordingly, the pathways should either be lit and patrolled, or secured and closed off and posted as no trespassing areas. There is little room for compromise. The risks outweigh the benefits.

Many cities around the world support art in public places. Often, a percentage of funding from all capital improvement projects in a city is dedicated to having art in the public forum. The most typical location for public art is in parks. Placing art in public spaces is an extension of CPTED's use of generating legitimate activity support. By providing amenities, like art, the park will attract the type of users that are desired. CPTED practitioners have used public art as an activity generator or attractive magnet of desired legitimate activities. The legitimate users will displace the illegitimate users, and attract capable guardians (parents, teachers, supervisors, coaches, tourists, sightseers, etc.) and increase natural surveillance and supervision.

I support enhancing access to safe public parks, from both a community health perspective, as well as an economic development perspective, and resulting in the improvement to the quality of life of the children and parents using these facilities. In addition to prominently placed signage, improvements suggested in the principles of CPTED include enhanced lighting, and improved natural access, and enhanced patrol and security. According to the CPTED literature, much of that I have written, the basic guiding principles to safety in parks includes: access control (gates, fencing, furniture placement), territorial reinforcement (signs, trees, paving), natural surveillance (on-site surveillance during programming and visibility from roadways), and maintenance (making timely repairs to broken equipment, painting over graffiti, etc).

In the past, parks and recreation areas were placed in areas where there were limited opportunities for visibility, as residents did not want to be disturbed by children playing, or have their line of sight interrupted by playgrounds, so parks were located in isolated areas, away from housing, and then surrounded with trees and shrubs. This trend created an environment ripe for crime and unsupervised disruptive behaviors, and parks were eventually perceived as unsafe places. Access control, signage, maintenance, territoriality, all principles of CPTED, have a great deal of application when it comes to parks, and open recreational spaces. As these principles have been successfully applied the parks, they become more inviting and people feel safer. The proposed SB522 will be a good start to improve the conditions of these critical amenity spaces, and as a result improve the quality of the experience and lives of the young people who use them.

Respectfully yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Randy Atlas". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Randy I. Atlas Ph.D., FAIA, CPP, CPTED

SB522 FAV BJC Park Child Safe Zone.pdf

Uploaded by: Sarah Miicke

Position: FAV

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Executive Director



Written Testimony

Senate Bill 522 State and Local Parks – Child Safe Zone Program – Establishment (Equitable Access to Safe Parks Act)

Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee - March 1, 2022

MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS

Adat Chaim Congregation
American Jewish Committee
Americans for Peace Now
Baltimore Chapter
American Israel Public Affairs Committee
American Red Magen David for Israel
American Zionist Movement
Amit Women
Association of Reform Zionists of America
Baltimore Board of Rabbis
Baltimore Hebrew Congregation
Baltimore Jewish Green and Just Alliance
Baltimore Men's ORT
Baltimore Zionist District
Beth Am Congregation
Beth El Congregation
Beth Israel Congregation
Beth Shalom Congregation of
Howard County
Beth Tfiloh Congregation
B'nai B'rith, Chesapeake Bay Region
B'nai Israel Congregation
B'nai Jacob Shaarei Zion Congregation
Bolton Street Synagogue
Chevra Ahavas Chesed, Inc.
Chevrei Tzedek Congregation
Chizuk Amuno Congregation
Congregation Beit Tikvah
Congregation Beth Shalom of
Carroll County
Congregation Tiferes Yisroel
Federation of Jewish Women's
Organizations of Maryland
Hadassah
Har Sinai - Oheb Shalom Congregation
J Street
Jewish Federation of Howard County
Jewish Labor Committee
Jewish War Veterans
Jewish War Veterans, Ladies Auxiliary
Jewish Women International
Jews For Judaism
Moses Montefiore Anshe Emunah
Hebrew Congregation
National Council of Jewish Women
Ner Tamid Congregation
Rabbinical Council of America
Religious Zionists of America
Shaarei Tfiloh Congregation
Shomrei Emunah Congregation
Simon E. Sobeloff Jewish Law Society
Suburban Orthodox Congregation
Temple Beth Shalom
Temple Isaiah
Zionist Organization of America
Baltimore District

Support

Background: Senate Bill 522, (SB522) would establish the Child Safe Zone Program housed in Department of Natural Resources. It would also fund the program at a minimum of \$1 million dollars in the state budget. The purpose of the Child Safe Zone Program would be to install signs at parks to identify areas as “Child Safe Zones.” This would enhance public safety for children and families in Maryland. The Fund would be used for both capital and operating items to enhance public safety in State parks at “Child Safe Zones.” It would also give grants to local governments for similar improvements in local parks to create these safe zones. These enhancements could include, lighting, camera, landscaping, as well as staff, including security personnel.

Written Comments: An investment in park safety is an investment in community. The Baltimore Jewish Council represents the Associated Jewish Federation of Baltimore and all of its agencies, including Comprehensive Housing Inc., (CHAI). CHAI is a nonprofit housing and community development organization that plays an integral role in the redevelopment of Northwest Baltimore. By making improvements to parks for safety, they become more accessible and enhance the overall community. Maryland children and families would be more likely to explore the outdoors and invest in other businesses and community assets near the parks.

Because of the improvements that the Child Safe Zone Program and Fund would bring to communities, the Baltimore Jewish Council asks for a favorable report on SB522.

The Baltimore Jewish Council, a coalition of central Maryland Jewish organizations and congregations, advocates at all levels of government, on a variety of social welfare, economic and religious concerns, to protect and promote the interests of The Associated Jewish Community Federation of Baltimore, its agencies and the Greater Baltimore Jewish community.

BALTIMORE JEWISH COUNCIL

5750 Park Heights Avenue, Suite 329 • Baltimore, Maryland 21215

410-542-4850 • fax 410-542-4834 • baltjc.org

Member of the Jewish Council for Public Affairs

Baltimore Jewish Council is an agency of The Associated



SB522_Hettleman_SAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Shelly Hettleman

Position: FAV



The Senate of Maryland ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

TESTIMONY OF SENATOR SHELLY HETTLEMAN

SB 522-State and Local Parks – Child Safe Zone Program – Establishment (Equitable Access to Safe Parks Act)

CDC data has highlighted that only around 25% of American adults engage in physical activity and 29% engage in no physical activity at all. The lack of physical activity has led to higher rates of obesity and related diseases like high blood pressure, diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and stroke. To combat the high mortality rates among American citizens and build healthy practices starting in childhood, the CDC recommends increasing access to parks and playgrounds. Supplemented by research that shows increased physical activity with increased access to parks, it is critical that we strive to establish equitable access to parks in our state.¹ Access to parks remains an area of improvement in Maryland; in 2020, Maryland State Parks showed a 45% increase in visitors since the past year, but due to the fact that many of our parks were over capacity-visitors were turned away from our parks over 292 times.² Given that access to nature has been linked with lower rates of childhood obesity, depression, attention deficit disorder, and the implementation of green space in communities leads to better community health, increased recreational opportunities, and increased environmental benefits, we must do our part to maintain access to parks in Maryland.³

Experts have coined the term “nature deficit disorder,” to address the myriad of negative physical and mental health outcomes that are derived from a lack of access to nature; part of the reason that children are not accessing nature is the fear of crime in distressed areas.¹ SB 511 combats this roadblock in access to parks through the establishment of a Child Safe Zone Program in the Department of Natural Resources and a Child Safe Zone Fund to provide funding for operating expenses related to enhancing public safety in local parks.

The Child Safe Program specifically aims to install signage in prominent areas of state parks indicating that the park is a Child Safe Zone, facilitate collaboration with local jurisdictions to designate local parks as Child Safe Zones, market the identification of parks as Child Safe Zones to the public, and fund the improvement of public safety in state and local parks. For example,

¹ Gies, Erica. 2006. “The Health Benefits of Parks.”

² Stole, Bryn. 2021. “By Reservation Only? Visitors Are Flocking to Maryland’s State Parks, Which Don’t Always Have Room for Them.” *Baltimore Sun*, June 2, 2021.
<https://www.baltimoresun.com/maryland/bs-prem-md-state-parks-20210610-fj3d5mnavnhghfg44qxfoqreiq-story.html>.

³ “Park Equity.” n.d. Maryland Department of Natural Resources. Accessed February 23, 2022.
<https://dnr.maryland.gov/pages/parkequity.aspx>.

funding will be used for improving infrastructure in parks such as enhancing lighting, security, and trash receptacles. Research has shown that street lighting reduces crime on average by 20% and observational evidence points to an increased sense of safety when spending time outdoors when ambient lighting is available.⁴ In fact, features like adequate lighting, toilet availability, and other aspects of park design impact how much a park is used by the community.¹

Thus, SB511's commitment to improving the safety of Maryland's parks will not only increase access to parks by communities but will also have downstream positive effects on the health and wellbeing of our citizens. I ask for your support of SB 511. Thank you.

⁴ Kaplan, Jacob, and Aaron Chalfin. 2021. "Ambient Lighting, Use of Outdoor Spaces and Perceptions of Public Safety: Evidence from a Survey Experiment." *Security Journal*. <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41284-021-00296-0>.

Testimony SB522_Hettleman_FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Shelly Hettleman

Position: FAV



The Senate of Maryland ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

TESTIMONY OF SENATOR SHELLY HETTLEMAN

SB 522-State and Local Parks – Child Safe Zone Program – Establishment (Equitable Access to Safe Parks Act)

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2022 - SB522 Parks Child Safe Zone Act. Testimony

Uploaded by: Steven Johnson

Position: FAV

March 1, 2022

SB522 – Parks – Child Safe Zone program – Equitable Access to Safe Parks Act
Testimony of Steven Johnson, President, Pimlico Terrace Neighborhood Association
Position: SUPPORT

Greetings Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee:

I am writing in support of SB522 – Child Safe Zone Program – Providing Equitable Access to Safe Parks. As the president for the Pimlico Terrace Neighborhood Association, which is located in Central Park Heights, public safety is a crucial element when it comes to the redevelopment of our community. Night in and night out, we hear of tragedies in our city due to violence, and crime, which continually piles on the depressing weight of trauma onto our children, and young people.

This bill will help communicate in a strong way that parks are a safe place for children and families to congregate; creating community interaction and providing a safe haven, for children, family, and the community. Parks, and green spaces, should be a place to come find peace, breathe fresh air, and escape the social ills, which have become norms in our society.

Studies show that children who are exposed to peace, love, and cleanliness, do better academically, socially, and emotionally. Children deserve a place where they can play safely and engage socially, being critical to their growth, as they too will be adults one day.

In addition to seeing signs that park users that the park is a “Child Safe Zone,” park users will also benefit from seeing improvement to parks that deter violence and crime. Better lighting and access points, esthetically pleasing landscaping, and intentionally enhanced security measures, will enhance public safety in these settings and encourage the community to utilize and appreciate our parks, and green spaces.

On behalf of the Pimlico Terrace Neighborhood Association, It would be of great benefit and reward, to our community, our city, and our society, that SB522 is given FAVORABLE support.

Your community partner in safety,

Steven T. Johnson

President- Pimlico Terrace Neighborhood Association

Testimony In Support of SB 522 - HB 788 - EHE - Sa

Uploaded by: Rich Ceruolo

Position: FWA



February 28, 2022

Maryland Senate
11 Bladen St.
Annapolis, MD. 21401

In Support of SB 522 / HB 788 W/Amendment(s): State and Local Parks – Improved Safety and Access

Members of the Maryland Senate’s Education, Health and Environment Committee.

We are an organization of military and non-military families with over 1400 members and fully support establishing a program to improve state park safety within SB 522.

The value of being outdoors is in some ways immeasurable. It’s good for one’s mental and physical being to get back and reconnect with nature. Especially during the past couple of years during Covid 19 shutdowns and quarantine periods. But this concept applies to both able bodied, and disabled citizens all across Maryland.

With the aging infrastructure in many of our local and state park systems, accessibility to some park resources, facilities, playgrounds and pathways has become an issue for some in our network of families. We hope that the MGA bakes into this bill’s recipe of improvements, some access and safety updates within a park improvement program that will also help improve access for All Maryland families, including individuals with disabilities.

We urge a favorable report on Senate Bill 522. Thank you for your time, and for considering our testimony today.

Mr. Richard Ceruolo | richceruolo@gmail.com
Parent, Lead Advocate and Director of Public Policy
Parent Advocacy Consortium (Find us on Facebook/Meta) |
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/ParentAdvocacyConsortium>

SB522 MACPRA Position Child Safe Zones.pdf

Uploaded by: Steve Miller

Position: FWA



MARYLAND ASSOCIATION OF COUNTY
PARK & RECREATION ADMINISTRATORS
(MACPRA)

**SB522 State and Local Parks – Child Safe Zone Program – Establishment
(Equitable Access to Safe Parks Act)**

Establishing the Child Safe Zone Program in the Department of Natural Resources to install signage in prominent areas of each State park identifying the parks as Child Safe Zones; to provide funding for capital and operating expenses associated with enhancing public safety in State and local parks;

February 28, 2022

MACPRA Position: SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENTS

The Maryland Association of County Park and Recreation Administrators recognizes the importance of safety in State and local parks. SB522 creates a “Child Safe Zone Program” that helps identify certain State and local parks as “Safe Zones”, and creates a special fund to assist with capital and operating expenses associated with enhancing public safety in parks. While the proposed start-up fund of \$1M in FY24 would provide an additional opportunity for State and local park agencies to address important security measures, its impact will be limited due to the immense need that exists throughout the State.

MACPRA does, however, support the general intent of the bill and offers its support to directly interface with bill sponsors, as needed, to make it a more effective piece of legislation. For example, clarification language may be required to:

- Determine, specifically, how grant funds would be administered and allocated;
- Explain whether municipalities would be eligible to directly apply for funds within the “Child Safe Zone Fund”;
- List what requirements are placed on local governments, if any, in the proposed legislation;
- More clearly define the 50’ park boundary as the “inside boundary” of the property (page 2, lines 27-28);
- Include “signage” under eligible infrastructure improvements at local parks (page 3, lines 27-29);

MACPRA offers its ongoing support and urges the Committee to give a **FAVORABLE** report on this bill.

The Maryland Association of County Park & Recreation Administrators (MACPRA) is an affiliate of the Maryland Association of Counties and represents the Parks and Recreation departments of all 23 counties and Baltimore City – the professionals engaged in the delivery of Parks and Recreation services throughout Maryland.

SB 522 State and Local Parks-Child Safe Zone Progr

Uploaded by: Barbara Wilkins

Position: INFO



Maryland

DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET
AND MANAGEMENT

LARRY HOGAN
Governor

BOYD K. RUTHERFORD
Lieutenant Governor

DAVID R. BRINKLEY
Secretary

MARC L. NICOLE
Deputy Secretary

SENATE BILL 522 State and Local Parks – Child Safe Zone Program – Establishment (Equitable Access to Safe Parks Act) (Hettleman)

STATEMENT OF INFORMATION

DATE: March 1, 2022

COMMITTEE: Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

SUMMARY OF BILL: SB 522 establishes the Child Safe Zone Program and Fund in the Department of Natural Resources to provide funding for capital and operating expenses associated with enhancing public safety in State and local parks, including staffing (security and law enforcement); and mandates an appropriation in the amount of \$1 million in FY 2024.

EXPLANATION: The Department of Budget and Management's focus is not on the underlying policy proposal being advanced by the legislation, but rather on the \$1 million mandated appropriation provision, which impacts the FY 2024 budget.

DBM has the responsibility of submitting a balanced budget to the General Assembly annually, which will require spending allocations for FY 2024 to be within the official revenues estimates approved by the Board of Revenue Estimates in December 2022.

Changes to the Maryland Constitution in 2020 provide the General Assembly with additional budgetary authority, beginning in the 2023 Session, to realign total spending by increasing and adding items to appropriations in the budget submitted by the Governor. The legislature's new budgetary power diminishes, if not negates, the need for mandated appropriation bills.

Fully funding the implementation of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future (Kirwan) will require fiscal discipline in the years ahead, if the State is to maintain the current projected structural budget surpluses. Mandated spending increases need to be reevaluated within the context of this education funding priority and the Governor's tax relief proposals.

Economic conditions remain precarious as a result of COVID-19. High rates of inflation and workforce shortages may be short lived or persist, thereby impacting the Maryland economy. While current budget forecasts project structural surpluses, the impact of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic continues to present a significant budgetary vulnerability. The Department continues to urge the General Assembly to focus on maintaining the structural budget surplus.

**For additional information, contact Barbara Wilkins at (410) 260-6371
or barbara.wilkins1@maryland.gov**

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<http://dbm.maryland.gov>

SB0522_DNR_EHEA_LOI_3-1-22.pdf

Uploaded by: Bunky Luffman

Position: INFO



Larry Hogan, Governor
Boyd K. Rutherford, Lt. Governor
Jeannie Haddaway-Riccio, Secretary
Allan Fisher, Deputy Secretary

Bill Number: Senate Bill 522

Short Title: State and Local Parks – Child Safe Zone Program – Establishment (Equitable Access to Safe Parks Act)

Department’s Position: Letter of Information

Explanation of Department’s Position

The Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR) provides the following information on SB 522.

The bill establishes a “Child Safe Zone” Program in DNR that seeks to (1) improve and enhance public safety at state and local parks; (2) install signage identifying parks as Child Safe Zones; and (3) facilitate collaboration with local jurisdictions. A Child Safe Zone designation includes the area surrounding the park, within 50 feet of the park’s boundaries. DNR must communicate the identification of state parks as Child Safe Zones to the public in its marketing materials. The bill establishes a Child Safe Zone Fund in DNR to provide funding for capital and operating expenses associated with enhancing public safety in state and local parks. At least \$1 million must be included in the FY24 budget bill for the fund.

The bill appears to apply broadly, making all 141,000 acres of State Parks land a Child Safe Zone. The Maryland Park Service would be required to post extensive signage, implement new marketing efforts, and manage a grant program for local governments. Furthermore, the bill could result in additional responsibilities for the Natural Resources Police.

Maryland’s 141,000 acres of State Park land, unlike county/city parks, is largely located in rural areas and does not have the intense recreation uses (ball fields and large playgrounds) in neighborhood settings. **Making all State Park land a Child Safe Zone would be problematic.** There are many inherent risks on natural and/or undeveloped state park lands (i.e., waterfalls, cliffs, vast forested tracts, wildlife, etc.) and developed state park lands (i.e. roads, agricultural equipment, stoves, off-road vehicles, etc.). Furthermore, the bill creates some level of expectation for increased public safety within a Child Safe Zone; however, the level of expectation is not defined in the bill. The impact on DNR’s liability is not clear. Finally, while the bill extends a Child Safety Zone to a 50-foot area surrounding the park’s boundaries, DNR has no jurisdiction over private property and thus cannot enter or implement safety efforts in those areas.

For any additional information, please contact our Legislative and Constituent Services Director, Bunky Luffman.

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