



February 18, 2022

The Honorable Kumar Barve
Chair, Environment & Transportation Committee
251 Taylor House Office Building
6 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Chair Barve,

I am writing in support of HB788 – 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 HB788 a FAVORABLE report.

Sincerely,

Patricia Foster
Executive Director
Cylburn Arboretum Friends