



March 14, 2022

RE: Senate Bill 817 – SUPPORT

Dear Chairman Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and members of the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee:

In September 2021, the Maryland Alliance of Boys & Girls Clubs was notified by the State of Maryland that their current system of providing federal background checks results directly to employers was in violation of federal law. The purpose of Senate Bill 817 is to direct the Maryland Department of Health to receive and review federal criminal background check data as part of our hiring process.

In the initial letter from the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services, they advised that the Office of Childcare within the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) would be the home for federal background checks for child care providers. Child care providers in Maryland are licensed by the Office of Child Care within MSDE. Child care providers typically care for children aged 0-5 and are subject to appropriate safety, staffing, and health guidelines that are closely and effectively enforced by the Office of Child Care.

Like many after school programs, the Maryland Alliance of Boy & Girls Clubs do not provide day care services associated with child care providers. The Boys & Girls Clubs and many other out of school time or after school providers fall under a different umbrella due to the population of youth they serve, and the programs provided. Out of school time activities include before and after school programs and summer camps youth ages 6 and up. Since our clubs qualify for the “youth club” exemption in the child care licensing code, MSDE has declined to perform the necessary federal criminal background checks as required by our national, Congressionally-chartered organization.

The state agency with licensing authority over the Maryland Alliance of Boys & Girls Clubs is the Maryland Department of Health – they are responsible for all summer camp licensure and Child Protective Services checks. Federal criminal background checks are an important part of ensuring the safety of our kids. We understand the state can no longer directly provide this information and believe that the Maryland Department of Health is the appropriate place for the Criminal Justice Information System disclosures. MOST, the Maryland Out of School Time Network has submitted testimony requesting expansion of this service to all non-childcare

We respectfully request the strong support of the Judicial Proceedings Committee. The Maryland Alliance of Boys & Girls Clubs need this information to ensure their well-qualified staff are providing great futures for Maryland kids.

Sincerely,

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BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS
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