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Appropriations Committee

Vice Chair
Health and Social Services
Subcommittee



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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Judiciary Committee

Thursday, February 17, 2022

HB 764—The Department of Human Services-Missing Individuals- Reporting

Dear Chair Clippinger, Vice Chair Moon and members of the Judiciary Committee:

- **HB 764** will require the Department of Human Services (DHS) and the appropriate local department of social services to submit a detailed report to law enforcement when a child in the state's care goes missing to ensure the child's safe return.
- This legislation clarifies the specifics for the needed reporting to law enforcement and will help to avoid escalated outcomes between law enforcement and missing children, many of whom have suffered trauma and/or suffer from other behavioral health issues which can make interactions with authorities risky. In addition, it is crucial that these children be returned to the appropriate therapeutic and protective setting.
- HB 764 requires DHS to submit a report and supply:
 - the name and birthdate of the child;
 - **a photograph;**
 - all identifying characteristics;
 - the last known location of the child;
 - and the amount of time the child has been missing.
- The employee making the report will supply their name, contact information and address so they can be notified once the child is located and DHS will retain a record of the report number provided by law enforcement.
- It is essential that we clarify the reporting protocol for all parties as these are very vulnerable children and often times can be a danger to themselves or others.
- I urge a **FAVORABLE** report on HB 764.