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—
Appropriations Committee



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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

HB 360-Juvenile Law- Informal Adjustment
February 10, 2022
House Judiciary Committee
SUPPORT – With Amendment

Dear Chair Clippinger and Vice Chair Moon:

- I am introducing **HB 360** which will allow a juvenile who has been sent for adjudication to go to the Department of Juvenile Services (DJS) for an INFORMAL adjustment— which if successful allows the entire petition for adjudication to be dismissed.
- This provision is one piece of juvenile justice reform.
- HB 360 (Informal Adjustment) is a bill I have introduced in consecutive years and its time has come.
- In 2020, as HB 842, the legislation had tremendous momentum and passed out of the House only to be cut short by the early COVID shutdown.
- That effort passed the House with the support of Department of Juvenile Services (DJS) , the Office of the

State's Attorney and the Office of the Public Defender (OPD).

- HB 842 was cited in the **Juvenile Justice Reform Council's 2021 Interim Report**—as a crucial foundation of its informal adjustment recommendations.
- In 2021 as HB 169 this legislation did not advance as it was incorporated into the 2021 Juvenile Justice Reform package which failed in the Senate.
- I am presenting this as a stand-alone bill should this year's 2022 Justice Reform full package not proceed.
- For years we have known that HB 360 is necessary.
- Low level offenses by youth indicate an opportunity to support and redirect a young person—and informal adjustment codified in law will fulfill the intent of juvenile proceedings.
- This bill meets the problems unique to adolescents-and their development ---who commit infractions, which are not criminal in nature, with dispositions that are not punishment.
- This bill furthers our legislative intent: that juvenile law is about protection of the juvenile so that in managing a case we think not in terms of guilt but in terms of a child's need for REHABILITATION.
- I have again collaborated with the Office of the Public Defender, Department of Juvenile Services and State's Attorney.
- This collaboration has lead us to agree that the evolution of the provisions of the 2022 Juvenile Justice Reform Bill be mirrored in HB 360.

- The informal adjustment provisions in HB 360 will result in lower recidivism.
 - The Department of Juvenile Services (DJS) pre-court supervision has been proven to work:
 - **A 2019 JOINT CHAIRMANS REPORT (JCR)** states that:
 - 4 out of 5 youth successfully complete pre court supervision
 - 96% of youth DO NOT have any adjudicated offenses while under pre court supervision
 - 90% of youth placed on pre court supervision do NOT have any new adjudicated offense during a one year follow up period.
- The data are clear. This APPROACH works.
- For these reasons I urge a favorable report on **HB 360** so that we can ensure that this important piece of juvenile justice reform comes to fruition in 2022.