

1 February 2022

HB 146: Education – Reportable Offenses and Student Discipline – Alterations
FAVORABLE

Greetings members of the Ways & Means Committee,

My name is Onyinye Alheri and I am an advocate from Baltimore's 40th district. I am writing to ask that you vote in favor of HB146 to alter the definition of "reportable offense" to not include offenses that occurred on school premises or at school-sponsored events. This bill would significantly limit the offenses that can be reported as "crimes of violence" and the amount of offenses for which youth are charged as adults. It would also make reporting optional rather than mandatory, effectively **reducing the number of students fed into the school-to-prison pipeline.**

Here are a few of the reasons why I urge you to support the bill:

- All students deserve the opportunity to learn, regardless of their circumstances outside of school
- Black, brown, poor and queer students are disproportionately harmed by the criminal legal system, inside and outside of school walls
- Research demonstrates the adverse impact of suspensions, expulsions, and removals from school for reportable offenses on students; most notably being disconnected from their education and social networks
- Students facing removal (or in the process of) deserve legal counsel

As a former Baltimore City Public School student, I am all too familiar with the negative impact that carceral logic plays on the lives of children. Criminal charges are not the solution nor the prevention of harm in schools. Preventative measures need to be taken to address the holistic needs of students, *before* harm occurs.

Thank you Delegate Moon for your continued, consistent **commitment to justice beyond a carceral logic**, and Delegate Atterbeary for your support. I urge the committee to vote in favor of HB146.

Best,

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