



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
Commission on Juvenile Justice

Marc Elrich
County Executive

James C. Bridgers, Jr. Ph.D., MBA
Director

February 28, 2024
HB 694 -- Favorable

Delegate Ben Barnes
Chair, Appropriations Committee
Room 121
House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Dear Chairman Barnes:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony on behalf of the Montgomery County Commission on Juvenile Justice (MC CJJ) in **support of House Bill 694, the ENOUGH Act of 2024**. MC CJJ was established to advise the Montgomery County Executive, County Council and the Juvenile Court on matters concerning juvenile justice. Our work includes gathering and disseminating information from public and private agencies serving youth, monitoring juvenile justice programs and services, visiting facilities, closely following relevant State and local legislation, and making recommendations regarding juvenile needs. MC CJJ is composed of appointed, volunteer citizen members, and agency members that include the Child Welfare Services Program, the Montgomery County State's Attorney's Office, the Office of the Public Defender, the Montgomery County Police Department, Montgomery County Public Schools, and the Maryland Department of Juvenile Services.

We believe that the establishment of a Governor's Office for Children will help to strengthen and prioritize Maryland's commitment to the health and well-being of our children. We are very supportive of the legislation's establishment of the Engaging Neighborhoods, Organizations, Unions, Governments, and Households (ENOUGH) Grant Program to provide access to high-quality education and care for Maryland's children and high-quality support for our children with disabilities, and those involved in the child welfare and/or the youth justice system. MC CJJ strongly supports efforts to close service gaps and to improve access to services for families and children, especially those that address the mental health, emotional, behavioral, and social needs of troubled youth and that are developmentally appropriate and trauma-informed. This bill can help to provide these types of resources which families and children need to thrive and which will thereby help to reduce youth justice system involvement.

For these reasons, we request a favorable report on HB 694.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Kevin Redden".

Kevin Redden, Chair
Montgomery County Commission on Juvenile Justice

Local Behavioral Health Authority • Behavioral Health and Crisis Services

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