

SUPPORT SB512 Prohibited Behavior on School Grounds and Property - Application

MARYLAND ALLIANCE FOR JUSTICE REFORM

Working to end unnecessary incarceration and build strong, safe communities



To: Chair Brian Feldman and Education, Energy, and Environment Committee
From: Jennifer Zito and Bill Carlson, MAJR Executive Committee
Date: February 26, 2024

The Maryland Alliance for Justice Reform (MAJR - www.ma4jr.org) support SB512 to reduce the "School-to-prison pipeline" by applying normal in-school disciplinary actions when students misbehave on their own school grounds (or while attending a sponsored event at an away school), rather than treating such actions as a crime as they are in current law.

The report of the Maryland Commission on the School-to-Prison Pipeline and Restorative Practices, an 18-month study established by HB1287 (2017), found that (pg. 27) "the criminalization of relatively trivial student behavior ... which might be a minor fistfight or something far less serious ... criminalized many children, especially youth of color, and contributed to the school-to-prison pipeline". SB512 fixes what is a prime example of the over-criminalization of certain behaviors by children.

The Maryland Alliance for Justice Reform (MAJR) is a nonpartisan, all-volunteer organization of nearly 2000 Marylanders who advocate for sensible, evidence-based legislative and policy changes in Maryland's correctional practices. MAJR thanks you for the opportunity to provide input on this important legislation and urges the committee to give SB512 a favorable report.