



THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Testimony of Senator Jill P. Carter

In Favor of SB732 – Department of Juvenile Services and Maryland
Department of Health- Inpatient Program for Children

Before the Judicial Proceedings Committee

On February 28th 2024

Mr. Chairman, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee:

Senate Bill 732, proposes the establishment of an inpatient program for children adjudicated delinquent. This initiative, will be led by the Department of Juvenile Services and the Maryland Department of Health, aims to provide essential rehabilitation, comprehensive care, and holistic therapies tailored to address the multifaceted needs of these vulnerable youths.

Senate Bill 732 recognizes the critical importance of early intervention and specialized care in redirecting the lives of children who have encountered the juvenile justice system. By creating an inpatient program specifically designed to address health, mental health, and substance abuse issues, we have the opportunity to break the cycle of delinquency and equip these young individuals with the tools they need to lead productive, fulfilling lives.

Furthermore, the holistic approach proposed by this legislation ensures that we not focus solely on punitive measures, but supports rehabilitation, acknowledging that many juvenile offenders have experienced trauma or face underlying challenges that must be addressed to facilitate genuine transformation. By integrating a range of therapeutic modalities and comprehensive services, including mental health counseling, substance abuse treatment, and educational

support, this initiative seeks to nurture the physical, emotional, and psychological well-being of each participant, laying a foundation for lasting positive change.

Senate Bill 732 reflects our collective commitment to equity and justice within the juvenile justice system. By ensuring that all children, regardless of their background or circumstances, have access to high-quality care and support, we uphold the principles of fairness and compassion that are central to our values as a state.

In conclusion, I urge you to give Senate Bill 732 your full support and favorable consideration. By investing in the rehabilitation and holistic development of our youth, we not only promote public safety and reduce recidivism but also uphold the inherent dignity and potential of every young person in our state.

Respectfully,

Jill P. Carter