



February 9, 2024

**Bill: Senate Bill 744- Juvenile Reform
Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee**

Position: Support

The City of Gaithersburg writes to express its support for SB 744: Juvenile Law- Reform.

Senate Bill 744 focuses on accountability for both juveniles as well as the juvenile justice system, and we consider this legislation to be a good start towards realizing sensible adjustments to the Juvenile Justice Reform Act of 2022. We firmly believe that many of the bill's proposed changes, such as decreasing the deadline for Department of Juvenile Services (DJS) intake decisions, increasing staffing within DJS's ankle monitoring unit, increasing probation limits for youth offenders, and allowing those under 13-years-old to be charged with certain crimes, including motor vehicle theft and firearms offenses, will enhance public safety while also holding juveniles accountable for their actions.

We believe that this bill is not only a significant step toward safeguarding our residents of all ages and backgrounds but feel that it also upholds the model of juvenile reform laws as being focused on rehabilitating young offenders rather than simply punishing them. This approach recognizes that juveniles are still developing emotionally, socially, and intellectually, and we agree with the many studies demonstrating that strictly punitive approaches to juvenile justice are often ineffective and can have long-term negative consequences. By providing resources such as education, counseling, and support services, this legislation aims to help reduce the likelihood of juveniles reoffending in the future while further addressing the root causes of delinquent behavior. While we are generally supportive of the positions expressed by the Maryland Chiefs of Police Association and States Attorneys Association, this bill is an improvement over what currently exists.

Therefore, we respectfully request a favorable report on Senate Bill 744. Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at 301-466-5350 or our government relations consultant, Therese Hessler, at therese@ashlargr.com. We appreciate your support.

Respectfully submitted,

Jud Ashman, Mayor
City of Gaithersburg

City of Gaithersburg • 31 South Summit Avenue, Gaithersburg, Maryland 20877-2038
301-258-6300 • FAX 301-948-6149 • cityhall@gaithersburgmd.gov • gaithersburgmd.gov

MAYOR
Jud Ashman

COUNCIL MEMBERS
Neil Harris
Lisa Henderson

CITY MANAGER
Tanisha R. Briley

Yamil Hernández

Jim McNulty

Robert Wu