



DEPARTMENT OF
JUVENILE SERVICES

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Date: February 8, 2024

Bill Number/Title: HB031
Juvenile Law - Electronic Harassment and Bullying - Inquiry by
Intake Officer

Committee: Judiciary

DJS Position: Oppose

The Department of Juvenile Services (DJS) opposes HB 31, which mandates DJS intake decisions on complaints alleging misuse of an electronic communicator or interactive computer service to be reviewed by the State’s Attorney’s Office.

Current law requires that DJS intake decisions involving serious violence offenses, handgun violations and violent felonies, be reviewed by the State’s Attorney’s Office. Once the State’s Attorney receives the complaint, along with the DJS recommendation, the State’s Attorney has 30 days to either dismiss the complaint, return the complaint to DJS for diversion, or authorize a petition be filed with the juvenile court. *Md. Courts and Judicial Proceedings, 3-8A-10.*

Although harassment through the use of electronic communication is very serious, the offense is a misdemeanor and DJS should retrain authority to either forward the case to the state’s attorney or proceed with a diversion intervention. Forwarding the complaint to the state’s attorney for their review will delay the imposition of support services for at least 30 days. Best practices dictate that youth outcomes improve with swift responses that address harmful behaviors and achieve positive behavior change.

DJS opposes HB 31 as it will result in unnecessary delays to provide appropriate diversion services and fails to improve outcomes for youth and victims.

For these reasons, DJS requests an unfavorable report on HB 31.

