

**Testimony submitted to House Appropriations Committee
March 4, 2025**

**House Bill 1429 - Youth Services Bureaus - Criminal History Records Checks –
Employees, Volunteers, and Interns**

Support

KEYS Empowers, Inc. supports HB 1429, a bill authorizing youth services bureaus to request a criminal history records check from the Criminal Justice Information System Central Repository for employees, volunteers, and interns.

HB 1429 corrects an unintended consequence of a recent federal policy that limits access to federal background checks. Because of this change, Youth Service Bureaus (YSBs) are not able to properly screen potential employees, interns, and volunteers.

As The Baltimore City Youth Services Bureau, we have proudly served the community since 2022. Our agency provides vital services such as barrier removal, case management, mentoring, entrepreneurship initiatives, and workforce development programs for minors. Each year, we connect with hundreds of local youth, empowering them to overcome obstacles and achieve their goals.

To ensure the safety and well-being of our scholars, it is imperative that we obtain approval for comprehensive background checks—including federal checks. Currently, we only have access to Maryland state background checks, which limits our ability to fully vet the adults who work closely with our youth. Without access to federal checks, we cannot adequately assess whether an individual has a criminal record outside of Maryland, posing a significant risk to our service delivery and the safety of those we serve.

We believe that ensuring the highest standards of safety is essential in fostering a supportive and secure environment for our youth. Therefore, we are seeking approval to facilitate these critical background checks, allowing us to continue our mission effectively and responsibly. HB 1429 would strengthen the ability to provide a safe environment for our youth.

We respectfully ask you to support this bill.

Respectfully Submitted:

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Ajah Doswell", with "LMSW" written in smaller letters to the right.

Ajah Doswell, LMSW CFO
adoswell@keysempowers.org
(443) 415-4034

