FREDERICK COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

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Honorable Delegates and Senators,

The Frederick County Sheriff's Office registers strong support of HB 526 / SB 386. This is common sense legislation that allows our public schools to make school safety decisions based on facts from law enforcement, the Department of Juvenile Services, and the State's Attorney's Office.

HB 526 / SB 386 fixes several problems with the current Reportable Offense Notifications.

Problem 1: The current law does not require DJS to tell the school system how it handles cases referred to their agency. Many of our Frederick County Sheriff Deputies' juvenile referrals result in informal resolutions by DJS — they never get sent to court for the State's Attorney's Office to get involved. Currently, DJS does not send any disposition information to Frederick County Public Schools. HB 526 / SB 386 would require DJS to provide the local school system with notice of informal resolution dispositions, which make up most of the juvenile referrals to DJS in Frederick County.

Problem 2: The current law does not allow law enforcement or the State's Attorney's Office to send official notifications to the school system related to arrests that occurred on school property or at a school-related event. While school staff are typically aware if law enforcement is involved in an incident at school, law enforcement cannot send formal notification about the outcome of the investigation. This is particularly an issue with longer investigations, such as sex offenses. School officials may know law enforcement is involved at the start, but investigations could last months. If a suspect is eventually charged, law enforcement cannot make a formal notification to the school letting them know.

Having our schools making safety decisions without legally correct data is not in the best interests of Frederick County, or the State of Maryland. HB 526 / SB 386 allows our schools to make safety, security, and attendance decisions with the most complete and accurate decisions. I urge you to make our schools safer and pass HB 526 / SB 386.

Sincerely,

Sheriff, Frederick County