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Dear Honorable Senators,

The Frederick County State's Attorney's Office registers strong support to **HB 386(HB 526)**. This legislation allows our public schools to act with facts rather than rumor when making school safety decisions.

Currently the Education Code 7-303 provides that law enforcement must notify certain designated school officials of the arrest of a student for a listed 'reportable offense.' The law does not require the Department of Juvenile Services (DJS) to tell the school how it handles such offense when it is referred to their agency.

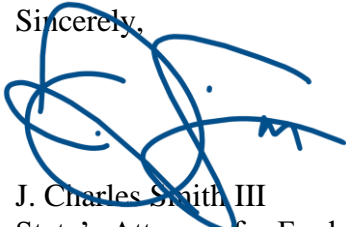
This legislation would allow the school system to be notified of what action DJS takes with the charges. If DJS refers the charges to court, the law already provides that the State's Attorney's Office notify the school of the final court disposition. This legislation would fix the gap and allow DJS to notify school officials if it decides to handle the charges informally and keep the case out of the courtroom. Designated school officials would be given up-to-date information to make school security decisions.

Currently 7-303 provides a list of offenses which are identified as "Reportable Offenses." This list includes many offenses including assaults, crimes of violence, weapons, sexual offenses etc., however if the offense happens on school property or during a school event the school is not given any notification of the arrest or court disposition.

This legislation would allow designated school officials to be notified if the police charge any of the enumerated offenses resulting from an altercation or offense that occurred at school. Under the current law, school officials are aware of the offenses occurring in their building but then are not allowed anything but rumor or self-report information to know how the situation was resolved. As an example, a student brings a gun to school or a rape is alleged to happen at a school: the school knows that law enforcement is involved, but law enforcement and the courts are legally not allowed to communicate with the school how the investigation was resolved. To have our schools making safety decisions for our students without legally correct data is not in our community's best interests.

Our school safety and attendance decisions shouldn't be compromised by incomplete data. Please support this measure to enhance school security and improve decision-making processes. I urge you to make our schools safer by passing this SB 386/ HB 526.

Sincerely,



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