

SB0078 – Juvenile Child Sex Offenders - Juvenile Sex Offender Registry and Prohibition on In-Person School Attendance

POSITION – Favorable

Honorable Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee,

I am writing to express my support for Senate Bill 0078, which addresses a critical safety concern in our educational system by prohibiting juvenile sex offenders from attending school in person.

The primary concern with allowing juvenile sex offenders back into school settings is the potential risk they pose to other students. Schools should be safe havens for learning, not places where students or parents have to worry about the presence of individuals with a history of sexual offenses. This bill addresses this concern by ensuring schools remain safe environments for all students.

A recent event highlighted by Fox45 News, where a juvenile offender was attending Patterson High School, underscores the urgency of this legislation. This bill would prevent such situations from recurring, thereby protecting students from potential harm.

While Maryland law already prohibits adult sex offenders from attending schools in person, this protection has not been extended to juvenile offenders. SB0078 corrects this oversight by including juveniles, thereby ensuring that all sex offenders, regardless of age, are subject to similar restrictions when it comes to school attendance.

The legislation also recognizes the need for alternative educational options for these juveniles, such as virtual learning, which aligns with the state's commitment to education while still prioritizing student safety.

The passage of this bill would restore and maintain public trust in our educational systems. Parents, educators, and the community at large expect and deserve assurance that schools are doing everything possible to keep children safe. This bill sends a clear message that Maryland takes the safety of its students seriously.

The bill does not deny education to these juveniles but instead requires alternative educational paths. This approach recognizes the rehabilitative aspect of juvenile justice while ensuring that the educational environment remains secure for other students.

In conclusion, Senate Bill 0078 is an essential piece of legislation that addresses the safety and security of Maryland's students. It aligns with the state's responsibility to protect its youth while still providing educational opportunities for all. I strongly encourage you to vote in favor of this bill to ensure our schools are safe, secure, and conducive to learning.

Sincerely,

Laura Wade  
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