



TESTIMONY FOR SB0827

Juvenile Law - Confinement and Restrictive Housing - Limitations

Bill Sponsor: Senator Love

Committee: Judicial Proceedings

Organization Submitting: Maryland Legislative Coalition

Person Submitting: Aileen Alex, co-chair

Position: FAVORABLE

I am submitting this testimony in favor of SB0827 on behalf of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. The Maryland Legislative Coalition is an association of activists - individuals and grassroots groups in every district in the state. We are unpaid citizen lobbyists, and our Coalition supports well over 30,000 members.

Our members object to the inhumane and potentially harmful conditions associated with the restrictive housing of minors, often referred to as solitary confinement. Prolonged periods in restrictive housing can have severe psychological and physical effects on minors, particularly those who are already vulnerable. This bill aims to mitigate these negative impacts by limiting the circumstances under which minors can be placed in restrictive housing and ensuring that the conditions are as humane as possible.

SB0827 prohibits the placement of a minor in restrictive housing for more than six hours a day yet allows a correctional facility to place a minor in restrictive housing at the minor's request. The bill also establishes certain requirements for detaining, confining, or transporting a child, and mandates that the Department of Juvenile Services notify a sentencing court within a certain period of time when a child reaches 18 years of age. The sentencing court is then required to hold a hearing and enter an order transferring the child to other appropriate facilities.

By limiting the duration and conditions of restrictive housing for minors, the bill promotes the humane treatment of incarcerated youth, which can lead to better rehabilitation outcomes and reduce recidivism rates. Protecting minors from the harsh conditions of restrictive housing ensures their safety and well-being, fostering a more just and equitable juvenile justice system. Moreover, this bill aligns with Maryland's commitment to upholding human rights and dignity within its correctional facilities. Implementing SB0827 will likely have positive ripple effects on the community, as rehabilitated youth are more likely to reintegrate successfully into society, becoming productive members of their communities. This, in turn, can lead to safer neighborhoods and a reduction in the overall crime rate.

The Maryland Legislative Coalition strongly supports SB0827 and urges a favorable report from committee. Our members want a more humane and just correctional system that respects the rights and dignity of all individuals.