

Brooke Wentz

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

January 24, 2024

My name is Brooke Wentz and I am a concerned resident of Maryland, a public school teacher, and a mother of three. I am testifying out of concern of students, teachers and staff in our Maryland public schools. Recently, it has come to light that administrators, teachers and staff are not privy to information when it comes to juvenile sex offenders and other criminals in our schools.

As a teacher, this means that a new student could be placed in my class (either at the beginning or throughout the school year) that has committed a sex offense and no one, not even the administrators, teachers, or parents would know about it. This has horrifying implications for safety in our schools. This means that the safety of both students and staff is currently at risk every day. In this way, we have placed the privacy of the criminal above the safety of our children.

I would like to ask that you vote for this bill to require juvenile sex offenders to be placed on a juvenile sex offender registry. As a teacher and parent, I would prefer that these students learn virtually. It is 2025 and we have the means for virtual learning for violent students. It is time we take violent offenders out of our schools.

Thank you Senator Salling for sponsoring this very important bill for the safety of Maryland's students and school staff. Your thoughtful consideration for the safety of our children is greatly appreciated.