

JOHNNY RAY SALLING
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Budget and Taxation Committee

Public Safety, Transportation,
and Environment Subcommittee



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THE SENATE OF MARYLAND ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

January 28, 2025

Judicial Proceedings Committee
Senator William C. Smith, Jr.
Senator Jeff Waldstreicher
2 Miller East
Annapolis, MD 21401

To the Chair, Vice Chair, and esteemed Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee:

I express my gratitude to the Committee for permitting me to address Senate Bill 78, titled Juvenile Child Sex Offenders - Juvenile Sex Offender Registry and Prohibition on In-Person School Attendance. This bill holds significant implications for the safety and well-being of our children within Maryland's educational institutions.

Last Session's Juvenile Justice Bill included the prohibition from attending public school of any juvenile convicted of a sex offense that would constitute a felony if committed by an adult. This bill address a critical oversight left by that bill.

This bill would add the following sections to the Reportable Offenses and prohibition of in-person attendance:

- A person may not engage in sexual contact with another if the victim is a substantially cognitively impaired, a mentally incapacitated, or a physically helpless individual.
- A person engage in sexual contact with another if the victim is under the age of 14 years, and the person performing the sexual contact is at least 4 years older than the victim.

I have added two amendments to this bill. The first ensures that once a juvenile sex offender is put on the juvenile sex offender registry, they will not be able to be removed before their 21st birthday. The other amendment requires that the victim or their families must be notified immediately once a juvenile sex offender has been removed from the registry.

The urgency of this legislation was underscored during a meeting I had last year with two concerned mothers whose toddler daughters were sexually assaulted by a student within the Baltimore County Public School system. Adding these two subsections would be specifically applicable to their cases.

Given the gravity of the issue, and the imperative to protect our children, urge you to prioritize the expedited review and passage of Senate Bill 78 demonstrating our unwavering commitment to the safety and well-being of our children.

Thank you for your time to allow me to testify and I am hopeful for your support in ensuring a favorable report on this bill.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Johnny Ray Salling".

Senator Johnny Ray Salling