

Aruna Miller
Lt. GovernorWes Moore
GovernorVincent Schiraldi
Secretary

Date: January 28, 2025
Bill Number/Title: SB 75 - Juvenile Law - Probation and Treatment Services - Required Disposition (Parental Accountability Act)
Committee: Judicial Proceedings
DJS Position: Oppose

The Department of Juvenile Services (DJS) opposes SB 75.

SB 75 requires the juvenile court to order probation, if the youth is not placed in secure confinement and the youth:

- is found delinquent of a crime of violence
- is found delinquent of a crime of violence with a dangerous weapon
- the court finds the youth used a firearm or handgun in the commission of a crime, or
- the child was found to be a child in need of supervision (CINS) and is habitually truant.

Additionally, the mandatory probation requires the participation of the child and the child's parent, guardian or custodian in rehabilitation services. If the parent fails to participate in treatment services or meeting with the juvenile counselor, the court is required to order the parent to engage in such services.

DJS opposes the mandatory nature of SB 75. Generally, probation is an appropriate response by the court in these matters. However, the court should only order any disposition after weighing all the aggravating and mitigating factors, reviewing behavioral assessments and evaluations, and hearing from all the parties involved. Requiring mandatory dispositions relieves the court of this thorough inquiry and may result in ordering a disposition not designed to support the individual youth in achieving positive outcomes.

For these reasons, DJS requests an unfavorable report on SB 75.

Contact: Kara Aanenson, DJS Director of Legislation Policy and Reform, kara.aanenson@maryland.gov

