

Nadine Finigan-Carr, PhD  
Executive Director  
601 West Lombard Street, Suite 429  
Baltimore, MD 21201

**TESTIMONY ON HB 0588**  
**Juveniles – Reportable Offenses**  
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**The University of Maryland, Baltimore Center for Violence Prevention (CVP) strongly supports HB 0588**, which would notify local superintendents and/or principals of a certain student's arrest of a school in which the student has enrolled or transferred, and requiring the Department to provide certain educational programming to said student. Access to education is a significant social determinant of health. All children deserve to be assisted in doing well in school as it has an impact on their long-term well-being.

The Center for Violence Prevention is a community informed initiative of the University of Maryland, Baltimore in collaboration with the R Adams Cowley Shock Trauma Center at the University of Maryland Medical Center – the first of its kind. Our aim is to build resilient communities for all through the prevention and intervention of all forms of violence and trauma. We do this in an interdisciplinary, collaborative fashion where we conduct community-based participatory research, provide creative and impactful education, and inform and advocate for policies that strengthen our communities to prevent violence and trauma. Our support of this bill is in line with the latter.

Juvenile offenses have decreased dramatically nationwide since the 1990s, but concerns remain high with regards to recidivism rates and the systemic overrepresentation of youth of color, youth with disabilities and youth in poverty. Black and Hispanic students were incarcerated at consistently higher rates than White students in the 2022-2023 academic year. In addition, up to 60% of justice-involved youth have learning disabilities that require special education services; and another study found that two-thirds of justice-involved youth had involvement with the child-welfare system. When looking at recidivism, youth with substance abuse issues and limited access to resources within the justice system are more likely to reoffend, as are students with below-average academic achievement — who are also more likely to enter the system in the first place. Youth's successful re-entry to their communities is compromised when they are deprived of adequate and appropriate educational opportunities.

Academic achievement levels influence a child's entry into and exit from the justice system — a fact that should not be ignored. Taken alongside the fact that only 16% of Black and 29% of Latino fourth graders read at proficient levels in 2022, and that reading proficiency for special education students continues to decline, the message should be clear: our education system is failing to meet the academic needs of overrepresented groups in the justice system, and this failure impairs our ability to restore young people to their communities. If public education is to realize its full capacity to reduce recidivism, it must make learning a top priority for justice-involved youth. The intent of this bill is to reduce the barriers which impact students' return to in-person learning in our state, especially for those who were not formally processed by DJS or adjudicated delinquent but were removed from in-person learning or otherwise disciplined following an arrest. Due to their current overrepresentation in reportable offense arrests and school suspensions and expulsions, Black students are mostly likely to benefit from the provisions of this bill.

For these reasons, the UMB CVP supports HB 0588 and respectfully encourages a favorable report.