



HB366 - Juvenile Law – Police Record Concerning a Child – Confidentiality Exception
February 6, 2025
House Judiciary Committee
Position: FAVORABLE

Maryland Legal Aid (MLA) submits written testimony on HB366.

MLA serves residents in each of Maryland's 24 jurisdictions, providing free legal services to the State's low-income and vulnerable residents in a range of civil legal matters. MLA is Maryland's largest civil non-profit law firm, representing vulnerable young people in Child in Need of Assistance (CINA) matters across the State. MLA urges the Committee's favorable report on HB366.

HB366 is a very limited bill that seeks to authorize the public disclosure by the Office of the Attorney General of the name and age of a child injured or killed in a police-involved incident. This authorization is only permitted with the express consent of the child's parent or guardian.

While we wholeheartedly support the privacy and confidentiality of information pertaining to minors, publishing the name of a child involved in limited circumstances can serve the public interest by ensuring transparency and accountability in law enforcement. This could potentially lead to reforms or changes in policing practices or community responses. In a society where police interactions with children, especially in marginalized communities, are often scrutinized, publishing limited information can raise awareness and facilitate broader conversations about the systemic issues that contribute to such tragic events.

The parents or guardians are still able to weigh the importance of privacy and well-being of the child. If consent is provided, publishing the child's name may be seen as a necessary step to uphold fairness and integrity in the investigation and its aftermath.

Maryland Legal Aid urges the Committee to issue a FAVORABLE report on House Bill 366 and urge its ultimate passage. If you have any questions, please contact: Erica I. LeMon, Advocacy Director for Children's Rights at elemon@mdlab.org (410) 951-7648 or (410) 935-0937.