

Aruna Miller
Lt. Governor

Wes Moore
Governor

Vincent Schiraldi
Secretary

Date: March 6, 2025
Bill Number/Title: HB 408 - Prince George's County - Coordinated Youth Violence Review and Response Team
Committee: Judiciary
DJS Position: Oppose

The Department of Juvenile Services (DJS) opposes HB 408. HB 408 erodes important juvenile confidentiality provisions and is duplicative of duties assigned to the Commission on Juvenile Justice Reform and Emerging and Best Practices.

Confidentiality is a fundamental principle of the juvenile justice system. Keeping records confidential ensures that justice-involved youth can be held accountable, receive necessary treatment, and successfully reintegrate into their communities without the stigma and discrimination associated with public records. In Maryland, juvenile records are generally kept strictly confidential and may only be disclosed with court approval. While the law provides certain exceptions, these exceptions are narrowly tailored to facilitate coordination among law enforcement and justice system partners. (Md Code, Courts and Judicial Proceedings, 3-8A-27.)

HB 408 will erode confidentiality protections by requiring youth records to be produced and reviewed by the Youth Violence Response Team. Moreover, HB 408 is duplicative as the Commission on Juvenile Justice Reform and Emerging Best Practices is already required to review all cases where a youth is a perpetrator or victim of an offense resulting in a fatality. DJS welcomes local coordination with partners to best serve youth and our communities, however it is imperative collaborative efforts do not impact confidentiality provisions or conflict with on-going efforts to serve the youth and families. DJS invites collaboration with the Prince George's County Delegation to ensure that information about the Commission's Fatality Review team's recommendations is shared.

For these reasons, DJS requests an unfavorable report on HB 408.



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