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Date: February 26, 2026
Bill Number/Title: HB 873 - Juvenile Law – Juvenile Court Jurisdiction – Theft of a Motor Vehicle Offense – Alterations
Committee: Judiciary
DJS Position: Letter of Information

The Department of Juvenile Services submits this Letter of Information regarding HB 873. This bill would modify the current approach of using the Child in Need of Supervision (CINS) process for youth under 13 charged with motor vehicle theft by creating an exception that would place these cases under juvenile court jurisdiction.

Last year, the Maryland General Assembly passed legislation to address motor vehicle theft involving younger youth who are not under the jurisdiction of the juvenile court (Chapter 735, 2024 Laws of Maryland). Under this law, if a law enforcement officer alleges that a child under 13 committed motor vehicle theft under § 7-105 of the Criminal Law Article, the officer must forward the complaint to DJS for the filing of a Child in Need of Supervision (CINS) petition. Additionally, the bill mandates that an intake officer must authorize the filing of a CINS petition upon receiving such a complaint.

Furthermore, the bill expands the required contents of the State Comprehensive Juvenile Services 3-Year Plan, which the Secretary of DJS is responsible for developing. The plan must now include: (1) programs for youth at the highest risk of becoming victims or perpetrators of gun violence, (2) targeted initiatives for individuals ages 10 to 14 who are at heightened risk of gun violence involvement, and (3) interventions specifically designed for youth involved in motor vehicle theft. These additions reflect a commitment to early intervention and prevention, ensuring that resources are directed toward addressing key public safety concerns and supporting vulnerable youth before they become further involved in the justice system.

DJS remains committed to implementing the recently enacted provisions, and will continue to monitor and evaluate the use of CINS as an intervention to support youth under 13 charged with motor vehicle theft.

