



HB 522 – Department of Juvenile Service-Rehabilitation Services-Funding

Committee: Judiciary

Date: 2/11/25

Position: FAV

The Maryland Coalition of Families: Maryland Coalition of Families (MCF) is a statewide nonprofit organization that provides family peer support services at no cost to families who have a loved one with mental health, substance use, or problem gambling disorder. Using their experience as parents, caregivers, and other loved ones, our staff provide emotional support, resource connection, systems navigation, support groups, and educational training and workshops.

Last year, we served nearly 5,000 families, of which 73% were families with children. For the reasons listed below, we are requesting a favorable report for HB 523 to help create a brighter future for Maryland's at-risk-youth

- This bill invests in rehabilitation measures rather than incarceration of youth, and it takes a more humane and cost-effective approach. It also highlights the importance of programs that divert youth from the juvenile justice system. Youth are our future, and when we invest in programs that provide these services, we invest in our future legislators, emergency personnel, social workers, teachers, tradesmen, and so forth. As well as the quality of life of the youth, the community, and families.
- A teenage girl found herself in some troubling situations and became very familiar with juvenile services. They knew her by name after many encounters. She was also a youth in the foster care system and had been stamped troublesome among her peers and within the system. She eventually connected with a mentor and found support through that connection. Feeling safe, she then disclosed some of the history of her past, the anger she felt, and other feelings surrounding her



experiences. She eventually went on to study nursing, graduating at the top of her class and becoming a nurse. Support is a protective factor.

Ashley Tauler, CA
Policy and Advocacy Manager
Family Peer Support Specialist
Maryland Coalition of Families
atauler@mdcoalition.org
Cell: 202.993.4685