



Washington County BOARD OF EDUCATION

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BILL: House Bill 952
TITLE: Juvenile Sex Offender Registry – Qualifying Offenses and Access
HEARING DATE: February 26, 2025
POSITION: SUPPORT
COMMITTEE: Judiciary Committee
CONTACT: Ilissa Ramm, Chief Legal Counsel, 301-766-2919

The Washington County Board of Education supports House Bill 952 to authorize a local superintendent or the superintendent's designee to access the Juvenile Sex Offender Registry and to add certain offenses to the list of offenses for which a person adjudicated delinquent is required to be included in the Juvenile Sex Offender Registry.

Current law prohibits those children that are on the Juvenile Sex Offender Registry from attending school in-person. However, there currently is no mechanism for notifying schools of such. HB 952 would address this issue by authorizing a local superintendent or the superintendent's designee to have access to the Juvenile Sex Offender Registry. The bill helps to address a crucial gap in ensuring a safe and secure educational environment.

Currently, school staff rely on the reportable offense procedures to determine if a student poses a risk to the education environment when charged with specific crimes. This bill would provide a means for schools to follow Criminal Procedures Article, Sections 11-704.1 and 11-722, Annotated Code of Maryland which prohibits juvenile sex offenders from accessing their education on school property. It does not prevent access to a meaningful education. Without an effective and appropriate reporting mechanism to schools, the previously enacted law does not provide the safety protection it had intended. HB 952 addresses this concern by authorizing a local superintendent or designee to access the Juvenile Sex Offender Registry to acquire the information schools require to maintain a safe and secure learning environment. The presence of students in school with histories of serious offenses that require juvenile sex offender registration or the presence of students likely to reoffend can cause significant disruptions, anxiety, and potential harm to others within the school environment.

HB 952 reflects a commitment to safe and secure learning environments for all staff and students by establishing a direct means for local school systems to acquire the information necessary to ensure registered sex offenders are kept out of schools, while continuing to have access to education through alternative means. The Washington County Board of Education supports House Bill 952 because it ensures a safe and secure learning environment.

The Washington County Board of Education fully supports House Bill 952 and requests the Judiciary Committee issue a favorable report.

Thank you.

Cc: Washington County Board of Education Members
Washington County Delegation to the Maryland General Assembly
Dr. David T. Sovine, Superintendent
Dr. Jennifer Webster, Associate Superintendent for Administration and Leadership
Dr. Gary Willow, Associate Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction
Mr. Jeffrey Proulx, Chief Operating Officer
Ms. Ilissa Ramm, Chief Legal Counsel
Mr. Brian Dulay, Director of Governmental Relations, Maryland Association of Boards of Education
Ms. Mary Pat Fannon, Executive Director, Public School Superintendents' Association of Maryland