



# LEGISLATIVE BLACK CAUCUS OF MARYLAND, INC.

The Maryland House of Delegates, 6 Bladen Street, Room 300, Annapolis, Maryland 21401  
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**The Legislative Black Caucus of Maryland offers its strong and favorable support for House Bill 627 (HB627), Protecting Students from Unjust Criminalization.** This bill modifies Section 26-101 of the Maryland Education Code to ensure that students are no longer charged with a misdemeanor for willfully disturbing school activities at the institution they attend or while participating in extracurricular programs at another institution. By eliminating unnecessary criminal penalties for school-based behaviors, HB627 is a crucial step toward dismantling the school-to-prison pipeline and fostering a more equitable approach to student discipline.

Black students in Maryland have historically faced disproportionate disciplinary actions, often leading to long-term negative consequences, including increased involvement in the criminal justice system. Studies show that Black students are more likely than their white peers to be suspended, expelled, or arrested for minor infractions—punishments that can severely impact their educational trajectories and future opportunities. HB627 ensures that discipline remains within the educational system, where students can receive appropriate interventions instead of being criminalized. Additionally, the bill mandates the collection of disaggregated discipline data, increasing transparency and accountability to address racial disparities in school punishment.

By protecting students from unnecessary criminalization, HB627 promotes fairness in school discipline policies and allows Black students to remain in an environment that prioritizes education over punishment. Ensuring that discipline is handled appropriately within schools rather than through law enforcement will help break cycles of systemic injustice and provide Black students with the opportunity to thrive academically and personally.

For these reasons, the Legislative Black Caucus of Maryland strongly supports HB627.

Legislative Black Caucus of Maryland