



SB 0296 Juveniles – Detention and Confinement – Limitations on Juvenile Contact with Incarcerated Adults

MCAA Position: **SUPPORT W/ AMENDMENT** TO: Judicial Proceedings Committee

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FROM: Christopher Klein, President
Lamonte Cooke, Legislative Committee
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The Maryland Correctional Administrator's Association (MCAA), an organization comprised of our statewide jail wardens and administrators for the promotion and improvements of best correctional practices **SUPPORTS Senate Bill 0296 WITH AMENDMENT** to remove the temporary holding exception for youth in adult jails and to require a DJS action plan.

The bill's intent to ensure juveniles, even those charged as adults, are not housed in adult facilities, where they may come into contact with incarcerated adults, is vital for their specific management needs. However, the bill's current temporary holding exception allowing up to six hours of processing in an adult facility is not operationally feasible in Maryland's local adult detention facilities.

Adult intake and processing areas are unable to provide sight-and-sound separation. Moreover, the six-hour time frame is not attainable state-wide because not all counties have 24/7 access to a judicial officer for initial appearances, and those that do have no control over when a person is seen. Many jurisdictions also lack sufficient transport capacity, and high volume or geographic constraints can impede timely transfer, particularly on weekends and during off-hours when transportation resources are limited.

To ensure SB 0296 is enforceable and protective, we request that the Committee remove the temporary holding exception and require the Department of Juvenile Services (DJS) to submit an action plan by October 1, 2027. The action plan should outline how DJS will meet the requirements of this legislation, including ensuring 24/7 judicial access for initial appearances (including video or telephonic options), adequate intake capacity, and convenient access for law enforcement officers. Specifically, the plan should ensure that officers may present juvenile arrestees at the juvenile facility that is geographically closest to them, without creating a major burden on their time or delaying their return to other duties, in a manner consistent with current adult facility booking practices.

The MCAA respectfully urges the committee to issue a **FAVORABLE report on Senate Bill 0296, with the requested amendment.**