



OFFICE OF THE STATE'S ATTORNEY FOR BALTIMORE CITY

February 19, 2026

The Honorable William C. Smith Jr.  
Chair, Judicial Proceedings Committee  
2 East Miller Senate Office Building  
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: Opposition to SB524 – Juvenile Records – Access by Baltimore City Mayor's Office

Dear Chairman Smith, Vice Chair and Honorable Members of the Committee,

On behalf of the Office of the State's Attorney for Baltimore City, I am writing to express our opposition to SB524, which aims to expand access of confidential Juvenile Records to several Baltimore City Offices. We believe that opposition to this bill is crucial to enhancing the integrity of our juvenile legal system and safeguarding the rights of children, whose confidential police records are a bedrock of our judicial system.

SB524 proposes to expand a specifically tailored statute that aimed at authorizing the city's Mayor's Office on Criminal Justice to obtain access to such confidential records when providing programs and services to a child who is the subject of the record, for a purpose relevant to the provisions of the programs and services, and the development of a comprehensive treatment plan.

This language allowed for the balance of allowing a limited amount of juvenile information when looking to offer coordinated services for these juveniles. We believe that given none of the entities listed in this bill are law enforcement entities that such information should be restricted and based solely on the consent of the Department of Juvenile Services (DJS).

Given that DJS has a longstanding partnership with the Mayor's Office, and remains the leading agency across our state when dealing with juvenile records and their diversionary programming, we would ask that any and all juvenile records be accessed by this agency, providing such information to the city upon request for such programming the city intends to perform moving forward.

Juvenile records have remained confidential for a reason, and given the uncertainty that still exists regarding the Side Step program implemented by the Mayor's Office of Neighborhood Safety and Engagement, and the fact that cases were "diverted" without victims of those crimes being notified, juvenile data possibly shared with the non-profits chosen to give services to these juveniles and there being no clear data or information



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showing if the participants involved successfully completed said programming, we would ask that you act with an abundance of caution before giving access to such sensitive information to various city entities, with no clearly defined structures or oversight.

We stand in opposition to this bill as written and ask that you hear from the Department of Juvenile Services on where they stand on this critical piece of legislation, as we would wholeheartedly support their recommendations as it relates to this bill. We ask that more information be provided to those of us in law enforcement who are tasked with holding these juvenile offenders accountable for their actions, and responsible to the victims of the crimes committed by these youth.

When our office was made aware of the Side Step program, and asked MONSE about that the information regarding these juvenile offenders be shared with our office, who as a law enforcement entity already has access to juvenile records; we were met with fierce resistance and told that "under the existing law, they were not able to share with us such information," even though the very same statute they are trying to amend clearly outlines further down in the statute that this does not prohibit the State's Attorney for accessing such records.

We would ask that if you decide to give such access to these records to any or all of the city entities listed in this bill, that they also are given "permission" to share such records with the State's Attorney's Office when we are seeking guidance as to the crime(s) committed, the victim of said crime and if the juveniles being diverted are in fact successfully completing said programming.

Thank you for your consideration in this important matter. I look forward to a positive resolution on this critically important bill.

Yours in service,

*Hassan Giordano*

Hassan Giordano  
Chief, External and Governmental Affairs  
Office of the State's Attorney for Baltimore City