

SB 737: Juvenile Law - Probation and Treatment Services - Required Disposition (Parental Accountability Act): Please vote to **SUPPORT** this bill.

Dear Judicial Proceedings Committee:

I am writing to express my strong **support** for Senate Bill 737, the "Parental Accountability Act", sponsored by Senator Joanne Benson (Democrat).

Juvenile delinquency and truancy remain serious challenges in Maryland, often linked to insufficient structure, supervision, and parental engagement. This bill takes a proactive, rehabilitative approach by requiring the juvenile court to place non-detained children—who have committed certain delinquent acts more than once or been adjudicated in need of supervision—on probation. It mandates the development of a treatment service plan and ensures meaningful involvement from the child's parent or guardian in the child's life and compliance with the plan.

By making probation a required disposition in these repeat or high-risk cases, **SB 737** promotes accountability for both the juvenile and the family, while prioritizing rehabilitation over punitive measures alone. **Structured probation with treatment services can address root causes like truancy, behavioral issues, or lack of guidance, helping steer young people away from further delinquency and toward positive outcomes.** This family-focused framework aligns with evidence-based juvenile justice principles that emphasize supervision, services, and parental responsibility to break cycles of crime and improve community safety.

Enacting this bill would provide courts with a consistent tool to intervene effectively in cases where repeated offenses signal the need for more oversight and support, ultimately benefiting Maryland's youth, families, and neighborhoods.

I urge the Committee to **give SB 737 a favorable report** and advance it for passage.

Strengthening parental accountability and probation requirements is a smart, compassionate step toward reducing juvenile crime and supporting successful futures for our children.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Trudy Tibbals

