



"Being here for Maryland's Children, Youth, and Families"

**Testimony submitted to Senate Judicial Proceedings
February 4, 2026**

**SB 296: Juveniles - Detention and Confinement - Limitations on Juvenile Contact With
Incarcerated Adults
Support**

The Maryland Association of Youth Service Bureaus, Supports SB 296 Juveniles - Detention and Confinement - Limitations on Juvenile Contact With Incarcerated Adults. Youth Service Bureaus provide prevention, intervention and treatment services to youth and their families. HB389 ensures that Maryland will come into compliance with The Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act (JJJPA). JJJPA places strict limits on holding children in adult facilities. Children may not be held for more than six hours unless a court finds it is in the “interest of justice” and children must remain completely separated from adult detainees at all times, known as sight and sound separation. Currently, Maryland is out of compliance this law and subsequently loses possible grant funds for prevention services.

The Maryland Commission on Juvenile Justice Reform and Emerging and Best Practices Report “Maryland’s JJJPA Compliance Crisis: Children in Adult Detention” highlights this issue “Maryland is significantly out of compliance with federal standards governing the pretrial detention of children charged as adults. In 2025, the United States Department of Justice’s Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) began enforcing thresholds on length of stay and sight and sound separation in adult facilities, using new data formulas to assess state performance. In FY 2023, Maryland’s detention rate was 93.26 per 100,000 children, over six times the federal standard of 14.68.9 That number rose to 119.59 in FY 2024, a 27% increase. The state reported roughly 1,600 violations, more than any other state, prompting OJJDP to exclude Maryland’s data from national averages due to its extreme outlier status” [Maryland's JJJPA Compliance Crisis - Children in Adult Detention - COMMISSION APPROVED .docx](#)

SB 296 requires youth, including those charged as adults, to be housed in a juvenile facility. This will bring Maryland in compliance with JJJPA.

We respectfully ask you to support this bill.

Respectfully Submitted:

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