



**TESTIMONY FOR SB0737 – Juvenile Law – Probation and Treatment Services –  
Required Disposition (Parental Accountability Act) – FAVORABLE**

**Bill Sponsor: Senator Benson**

**Committee: Judicial Proceedings**

**Organization Submitting: Maryland Legislative Coalition**

**Person Submitting: Jessica Gorski, Executive Committee**

**Position: FAVORABLE**

Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Jessica Gorski, and I am submitting this testimony in strong support of SB0737 on behalf of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. We are a statewide coalition of grassroots organizations representing more than 30,000 Marylanders across every legislative district. Our mission is to promote legislation that strengthens education, healthcare, public safety, environmental protection, and social justice—ensuring that every Marylander has access to the resources and opportunities needed to thrive.

SB0737 directly advances that mission by strengthening Maryland’s juvenile justice system through a more structured, treatment-focused approach to probation for youth who have been adjudicated delinquent or identified as children in need of supervision (CINS).

This bill requires the juvenile court to order probation for a child who has committed certain delinquent acts more than once or who has been adjudicated a CINS more than once due to habitual truancy. It also requires that probation include a treatment service plan to ensure the child and their family receive appropriate supports, interventions, and services tailored to the child’s needs.

These provisions are both practical and urgently needed.

**Maryland’s juvenile justice system is most effective when it focuses on rehabilitation, early intervention, and family-centered support. Youth who repeatedly engage in delinquent behavior or chronic truancy often face underlying challenges such as unmet behavioral health needs, unstable housing, family stress, or learning**

**difficulties. SB0737 ensures that probation is not merely punitive but instead includes a structured plan that connects youth and families to meaningful services.**

By requiring treatment service plans, the bill promotes accountability while addressing the root causes of behavior. This approach reduces recidivism, strengthens family stability, and improves long-term outcomes for young people. It also ensures that courts, service providers, and families work collaboratively to support the child's success.

SB0737 reflects a trauma-informed and equity-centered approach to juvenile justice. Youth involved in the system, particularly youth of color and youth from low-income communities, often experience significant barriers to accessing supportive services. Ensuring that probation includes a coordinated treatment plan helps reduce disparities and ensures that all young people receive the care and guidance they need.

SB0737 aligns squarely with the mission of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. It strengthens public safety, supports families, and promotes equitable access to rehabilitative services across the state. By ensuring that probation is paired with meaningful treatment and support, this legislation reinforces Maryland's commitment to helping young people thrive rather than cycle deeper into the justice system.

We urge the Committee to support this thoughtful, necessary, and youth-centered legislation.

Thank you for your time and consideration. **We respectfully urge a FAVORABLE report on SB0737.**