



LEGISLATIVE BLACK CAUCUS OF MARYLAND, INC.

The Maryland House of Delegates, 6 Bladen Street, Room 300, Annapolis, Maryland 21401
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Chair Senator William C. Smith, Jr.
Judicial Proceedings Committee
2 East Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Dear Chair Bartlett and Members of the Committee,

The Legislative Black Caucus of Maryland offers its strong and favorable support for Senate Bill 296 - Juveniles - Detention and Confinement - Limitations on Juvenile Contact With Incarcerated Adults. This important legislation advances juvenile justice reform, protects the safety and well-being of children in state custody, and reinforces Maryland's commitment to trauma-informed, developmentally appropriate public safety practices. **This bill is a 2026 legislative priority for the Black Caucus.**

Senate Bill 296 addresses a critical issue within the juvenile justice system: the harmful impact of placing children in direct contact with incarcerated adults. Extensive research and best practices demonstrate that exposure to adult detention environments increases the risk of physical harm, psychological trauma, and long-term negative outcomes for youth. For Black children, who are disproportionately represented at every stage of the justice system, these risks are even more pronounced. SB 296 takes a necessary step to ensure that children are treated as children, not as adults, within Maryland's detention and confinement systems.

By limiting contact between juveniles and incarcerated adults during detention, confinement, and transportation, Senate Bill 296 promotes safer environments that support rehabilitation rather than punishment. The bill aligns with evidence-based approaches that emphasize youth development, accountability, and successful reintegration into school, family, and community life. These protections are essential to reducing recidivism and improving long-term public safety outcomes.

For these reasons, the Legislative Black Caucus of Maryland urges favorable consideration of Senate Bill 296.

Legislative Black Caucus of Maryland