

HON. STACY A. MAYER  
CIRCUIT COURT  
JUDGE  
BALTIMORE COUNTY  
CHAIR

HON. RICHARD SANDY  
CIRCUIT COURT  
JUDGE  
FREDERICK COUNTY  
VICE-CHAIR



KELLEY O'CONNOR  
ASSISTANT STATE COURT  
ADMINISTRATOR  
GOVERNMENT RELATIONS  
AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS  
P: (410) 260-1560

SUZANNE PELZ, ESQ.  
SNR. GOVT. RELATIONS AND  
PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICER  
P: (410)260-1523

## MARYLAND JUDICIAL COUNCIL LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE

### MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee  
**FROM:** Legislative Committee  
Suzanne D. Pelz, Esq.  
410-260-1523  
**RE:** Senate Bill 737  
Juvenile Law - Probation and Treatment Services - Required  
Disposition (Parental Accountability Act)  
**DATE:** February 18, 2026  
(2/25)  
**POSITION:** Oppose

---

The Maryland Judiciary opposes Senate Bill 737.

The Judiciary recognizes that it is legislative prerogative to craft legislation around probation in juvenile cases but notes that as drafted, this bill raised several concerns, including the following:

Most concerning, the bill would remove judicial discretion to determine whether to place a child on probation in certain circumstances. By requiring the juvenile court to place a child on probation under the circumstances set out in the bill, the bill essentially prevents the juvenile court from determining whether, at this time, the child who has committed a delinquent act requires guidance, treatment, or rehabilitation.

The bill also applies to a child “not ordered to be held in secure confinement”. “Secure confinement” is not a term defined in statute. It is unclear whether the term would refer to only what the Department of Juvenile Services refers to a “hardware secure facility” or

would it also include a “staff secure facility. It is also unclear if it would include a therapeutic residential treatment center or shelter care.

Finally, the proposed amendment to § 3-8A-20.1 appears to change the definition of “treatment service plan” to include a “plan ordered [new language] at a [certain] hearing “by the Department of Juvenile Services”. That department has no authority to order the plan; that is solely a judicial responsibility. It is unclear what the bill envisions.

cc. Hon. Joanne Benson  
Judicial Council  
Legislative Committee  
Kelley O’Connor