



Testimony of the Mayor and Council of Rockville SB 537 – Youth Delinquency Prevention Fund – Establishment SUPPORT

Good afternoon, Chair Smith and members of the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee. I am Rockville Associate City Manager Linda Moran, and I thank you for this opportunity. We thank Senator for sponsoring this important legislation, which aligns with the Rockville Mayor and Council's priority to advocate for youth and at-risk youth programming.

The Rockville Mayor and Council unanimously support SB 537, which establishes the Youth Delinquency Fund. This fund would provide critical resources for community-based programs serving Maryland's youth, including Youth Service Bureaus (YSBs). This fund would provide grants to support programs for delinquency prevention, youth suicide prevention, drug and alcohol abuse prevention, and youth development. The funds would also be used to improve conditions contributing to delinquency, substance abuse, and family disruption, as well as to advocate for youth needs.

The City was a partner with the State for many years, as a designated YSB, to provide delinquency prevention and intervention services based on funds from both the State and local government. Without state funding, it is now not a designated YSB, but it has continued offering the same services, with City and County funding, as the School and Community Youth Services Program (SCYS). Rockville could benefit from partnering again with the state to facilitate serving more children, youth, and families as the need continues to grow. We request that the State reinstate funding for YSBs, which is critically needed to support the well-being of our Youth.

The Rockville SCYS program is based in several schools and the community and has provided mental health services, youth development, and enrichment programs to support youth and their families. The benefits of the program include:

- Service provisions to address social isolation, academic struggles, social-emotional delays, due to the pandemic, and positive youth development.
- Youth and their families have benefited from assistance, addressing depression, anxiety, trauma, substance misuse, and mood and behavior regulation.
- Program staff have seen students succeed in their home, school, and community, who, without assistance, were losing self-esteem and struggling to have hope for success.

Senate Bill 537 represents a critical investment in early, community-based interventions that improve the health, well-being, and resilience of children and adolescents. By directing dedicated funding to these programs, this bill helps ensure that children and families have access to preventive resources and supportive services before issues escalate. For these reasons, we urge the committee to provide SB 537 with a favorable report. Thank you.