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Date: February 19, 2026
Bill Number/Title: SB 524 Juvenile Records - Access by Baltimore City Mayor's Office
Committee: Judicial Proceedings Committee
DJS Position: Favorable With Amendment

The Department of Juvenile Services (DJS) supports SB 542 with an amendment. SB 524 expands access to confidential juvenile records under § 3-8A-27 of the Courts and Judicial Proceedings Article to permit the following Baltimore City Mayor's Offices to obtain and use those records:

1. The Mayor's Office of Neighborhood Safety and Engagement;
2. The Mayor's Office of Children and Family Success; and
3. The Mayor's Office of African American Male Engagement.

Under the bill, these offices may access juvenile records only when they are providing programs or services to the child who is the subject of the record, and only for purposes directly related to delivering those services or developing a comprehensive treatment plan.

Historically, Maryland Courts and Judicial Proceedings § 3-8A-27 included a narrowly tailored provision authorizing the Baltimore City Mayor's Office on Criminal Justice (now renamed to Mayor's Office of Neighborhood Safety and Engagement) to access confidential juvenile records when providing services to a child. That provision sunsetted in 2025. The prior language reflected a careful legislative balance: preserving the confidentiality of juvenile records while allowing limited information sharing when necessary to coordinate services for youth.

As introduced, SB 524 is broader than the former provision as it adds multiple Mayor's Offices to the list of entities eligible to access confidential records. DJS has a longstanding and productive partnership with the Baltimore City Mayor's Office and remains committed to working collaboratively to connect youth and families with services that can interrupt cycles of violence and promote long-term stability. Thoughtful information sharing can be an important tool in that effort.

At the same time, juvenile records are confidential for a reason. Maryland law recognizes that protecting the privacy of young people is central to rehabilitation, fairness, and long-term opportunity. Information sharing in the juvenile system must therefore be narrowly crafted, clearly defined, and limited to what is necessary to achieve specific service goals. Expanding access too broadly risks undermining the confidentiality framework that is foundational to the juvenile justice system. For those reasons, DJS is asking for the following amendment:

(9) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the Department of Juvenile Services may provide access to and confidential use of a juvenile court record to the Baltimore City Mayor's Office of Neighborhood Safety and Engagement, or to a local government agency performing substantially similar youth engagement programming, provided that all of the following conditions are met:

(a) The disclosure is strictly limited to purposes directly related to supporting the treatment, rehabilitation, reentry planning, or continuity of care for the child who is the subject of the record;

(b) The disclosure is governed by a written memorandum of understanding between the Department and the receiving agency that:

- (i) Identifies the specific records to be shared;**
- (ii) Defines the purpose and necessity of the disclosure;**
- (iii) Limits the use and purposes described in this paragraph;**
- (iv) Prohibits redisclosure of the records to any other person or entity; and**
- (v) Requires compliance with all applicable state and federal confidentiality laws;**

(c) The receiving government agency is liable for any unauthorized release of the records and shall maintain them confidentially in accordance with state law and the terms of the memorandum of understanding

This approach establishes a structured, accountable framework for the sharing of confidential juvenile records with the Baltimore City Mayor's Office of Neighborhood Safety and Engagement, and with similarly situated local agencies providing youth engagement or violence prevention programming. Additionally, it would ensure that any disclosure is narrowly tailored to treatment, rehabilitation, reentry planning, or continuity of care; is governed by a written memorandum of understanding with clear guardrails; and is subject to strict limits on use and redisclosure. In doing so, the amendment preserves the focused, service-driven information-sharing pathway envisioned under prior law, while safeguarding the integrity of Maryland's juvenile confidentiality protections.

For these reasons, DJS respectfully requests a favorable with amendment to SB 524.