



BILL: House Bill 12
TITLE: Juvenile Sex Offender Registry – Qualifying Offenses and Access
HEARING DATE: January 29, 2026
POSITION: FAVORABLE
COMMITTEE: Judiciary Committee
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The Washington County Board of Education supports House Bill 12 to authorize a local superintendent or the superintendent's designee to access the Juvenile Sex Offender Registry and to add certain offenses to the list of offenses for which a person adjudicated delinquent is required to be included in the Juvenile Sex Offender Registry.

Currently, Sections 11-704.1 and 11-722 of the Criminal Procedures Article prohibit those students who are registered sex offenders or are on the Juvenile Sex Offender Registry from attending school in-person and requires such students to continue to receive their education through home and hospital teaching, virtual learning, or placement at a nonpublic educational program. However, there is currently no mechanism for notifying schools of students on the Juvenile Sex Offender Registry. HB 12 would address this issue by authorizing a local superintendent or the superintendent's designee to have access to the registry, which would help to address a crucial gap in ensuring a safe and secure educational environment. The bill does not prevent access to a meaningful education and any registered student sex offender or juvenile registrant who has a Section 504 Plan (504 Plan) or Individualized Education Plan (IEP) would still continue to receive the services and instructional modifications established through the 504 Plan or IEP. School systems would remain statutorily bound to ensure that the student's educational needs are being met and that the student continues to receive a Free and Appropriate Education (FAPE) in the new learning environment or change of placement.

Currently, school staff rely on the reportable offense procedures to determine if a student poses a risk to the education environment when charged with specific crimes. This bill would provide a means for schools to follow Criminal Procedures Article, Sections 11-704.1 and 11-722, Annotated Code of Maryland. Without an effective and appropriate reporting mechanism to schools, the previously enacted laws do not provide the safety protection it had intended because it has been, and continues to be, Washington County Public Schools' experience that notification of students who are on the Juvenile Sex Offender Registry does not occur. HB 12 addresses this concern by authorizing a local superintendent or designee to directly access the Juvenile Sex Offender Registry to acquire the information schools require to maintain a safe and secure learning environment instead of having to rely on others to provide this critical information. The presence of students in school with histories of serious offenses that require juvenile sex offender registration or the presence of students likely to reoffend can cause significant disruptions, anxiety, and potential harm to others within the school environment.

HB 12 reflects a commitment to safe and secure learning environments for all staff and students by establishing a direct means for local school systems to acquire the information necessary to ensure registered sex offenders are kept out of schools, while continuing to have access to education through alternative means. The Washington County Board of Education supports House Bill 12 because it assists with ensuring a safe and secure learning environment.

The Washington County Board of Education fully supports House Bill 12 and requests the Judiciary Committee issue a favorable report.

Thank you.

cc: Washington County Board of Education Members
Washington County Delegation to the Maryland General Assembly
Dr. David T. Sovine, Superintendent
Dr. Gary Willow, Deputy Superintendent
Mr. Jeffrey Proulx, Chief Operating Officer
Mr. Jeremy Jakoby, Director of Student Services
Mr. Steve Ganley, Safety and Security Manager