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January 27, 2026

BILL: HB 12 – Juvenile Sex Offender Registry - Qualifying Offenses and Access

COMMITTEE: Judiciary

POSITION: Favorable with Amendment

RE: Statement of Support with Requested Amendments

Dear Chairwoman Bartlett, Vice Chair Davis, Delegate Griffeth and Delegate Grammer and Honorable Members of the Judiciary Committee,

I am Alita-Geri Carter, the owner of Qualequity Access, LLC., a consultancy grounded in data-driven transformation that advocates for quality, equity, access, and accessibility in healthcare and education. I am the mother of two children with disabilities, a former practicing nursing practitioner, special education parent advocate, and public health servant.

I am writing to offer a **Favorable with Amendments** report on **House Bill 12**. While I support the intent to enhance school safety by providing local superintendents with necessary information regarding juvenile registrants, the bill's current language focuses heavily on registration without mandating the **adequate monitoring** and **rehabilitative support** required to prevent future victimization.

Early in my career as a Maryland pediatric ER nurse, I witnessed trauma that words cannot map. I carry the weight of families shattered on both sides of tragedy, victims and offenders, knowing that for both, the road to healing is long and scarred. More than a decade ago, I cared for a 5-year-old boy sexually assaulted by a 12-year-old neighbor. I remember the haunting calm of that child as he pointed to the evidence on his clothes, his mind too young to process the horror. I performed the agonizing ritual of masking my own heartbreak while watching a father hold his sobbing wife. My heart also broke for the 12-year-old. As a pediatric nurse, I knew his actions were not developmentally appropriate; they were likely a cry from a dark place an ER is not equipped to illuminate. I will carry the secondary trauma of that shift to my grave.

My experiences motivate me to prioritize humanity and empathy along with safety and justice. Expanding a registry without addressing the systemic roots of juvenile offending only creates a false sense of security. We are failing the children, both the harmed and the harmer, our schools are sworn to protect. Adding a name to a list without intensive intervention is not policy; it is empty performance.

I respectfully urge the Committee to adopt the following amendments:

1. Mandate Trauma-Informed Safety and Support Plans

Access to a registry does not equate to student safety. Many juveniles who engage in these behaviors have a history of being victims themselves.



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- **Requested Amendment:** Require that upon receiving notice of a juvenile registrant, the local superintendent or designee must develop a **Multi-Disciplinary Safety and Support Plan**. This plan must include trauma-informed monitoring and mental health services to ensure the child is adequately supervised in the educational environment.

2. Differentiate Between Predatory and Peer-to-Peer Incidents

The expansion of qualifying offenses, particularly regarding digital content, can sweep non-predatory "peer-to-peer" incidents into the same administrative category as predatory behavior.

- **Requested Amendment:** Provide the local superintendent authority in consultation with trauma-informed mental and behavioral health providers to distinguish between different levels of risk when determining the extent of monitoring, ensuring that resources are focused on those most likely to re-offend. Superintendents are not required to have training or experience in mental, emotional, or behavioral health. Neither is there a requirement for them to be trained in special education or disability rights in the state of Maryland.

3. Ensure Educational Equity and Continuity

The collapse of vital services, such as the school bus transportation failures we witnessed in SY 24-25, reminds us that administrative intent does not always lead to successful execution.

- **Requested Amendment:** Ensure that the "superintendent's designee" is trained to balance safety with the child's right to a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE). We must not allow expanded registration to become a tool for "gatekeeping" that leaves children without access to an education.

Conclusion

A registry is a list; it is not a safety plan. We must ensure that our school leaders are not just holding names but are actively engaged in the monitoring and rehabilitation required to break the cycle of victimization. We cannot afford another systemic collapse in oversight where the most vulnerable students pay the price and the risk for future incidents grows unabated.

I respectfully urge a Favorable with Amendments report on HB 12.

Respectfully Submitted,
Alita-Geri Carter, MSN, DNP-C, CPNP-PC, BCPA
Resident, Howard County, MD