

MAYSB_FAV_SB 769

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"Being here for Maryland's Children, Youth, and Families"

Testimony submitted to Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

March 3, 2020

Senate Bill 769 – Department of Juvenile Services - Juvenile Strategic Reentry Program

Support

The Maryland Association of Youth Service Bureaus, which represents a statewide network of bureaus throughout the State of Maryland, **Supports** Senate Bill 769 – Department of Juvenile Services - Juvenile Strategic Reentry Program. SB 769 will create a program to reduce recidivism for children and youth returning to their communities from juvenile facility. The program will provide re-entry specialists who meet with the youth before release and offer resources to both the youth and family upon release to stabilize the youth and ease re-entry into the community.

Youth Service Bureaus work with youth involved in the juvenile justice system and know that increasing supports to the youth and family as the youth transitions back home is important. The reentry specialists will connect the youth and family to important resources such as mental health, medical, educational and vocational programs and monitor the youth's progress until they reach the age of 18.

We believe that this action corresponds with the State's movement toward a juvenile system that is developmentally informed. A developmentally informed approach to juvenile justice recognizes the need to hold youth accountable for their actions while also offering them the resources and opportunities to divert them from future involvement with the juvenile justice system. This program will directly work to divert youth from further involvement by providing resources and connections in the community.

We respectfully ask you to **Support** this bill.

Respectfully Submitted:

Liz Park, PhD
MAYSB Chair
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NARAL_FAV_SB769

Uploaded by: philip, diana

Position: FAV



SB0769 - Department of Juvenile Services - Juvenile Strategic Reentry Program

Presented to the Honorable Will Smith and Members of the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

March 3, 2020 12:00 p.m.

POSITION: FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS

NARAL Pro-Choice Maryland **urges the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee a favorable report on SB0769 Department of Juvenile Services - Juvenile Strategic Reentry Program**, sponsored by Senator Obie Patterson.

Our organization is an advocate for reproductive health, rights, and justice. We strive to ensure every child-bearing individual has the right to decide if, when, and how to form their families and to parent in good health, in safety, and with dignity. Youth have the same rights as adults in choosing when to form their families. Among our campaigns to ensure reproductive freedom for all Marylanders, we seek to help identify and create effective supports to help pregnant and parenting youth realize goals of self-sufficiency and economic security. We applaud the introduction of this legislation to find ways to strengthen the reentry programming for systems-involved youth. However, reentry case management can be drastically different when it comes to female and male juveniles, such as issues faced by pregnant and parent youth. These areas should be made priorities within the scope of programming provided and not ignored.

As advocates during the 2020 Maryland General Assembly are currently seeking to pass bills addressing the inequities of having nine prerelease centers open to men, while none provided to women, it will be important to ensure that issues of equity are also effectively addressed in SB0769. For example, there needs to be dedicated case management to assist pregnant and parenting individuals about healthcare access to ensure positive pregnancy outcomes, as well as ways to secure or maintain custody or visitation rights. There may be many barriers for younger individuals to successfully reintegrate into their communities and effectively care for their families. Females are three times more likely than males to head a single parent household and approximately seventy-five percent of women are primary caretakers of childrenⁱ. Yet, the incarceration of women has increased since 1978 at a rate that is over twice the rate of men.ⁱⁱ The incarceration of females continues to escalate and if we do not offer adequate prerelease services, we will consequently see a rise in recidivism, and having more children left behind as their mothers are incarceratedⁱⁱⁱ.

Our organization, in alliance with the coalition Reproductive Justice Inside, is advocating for the passage of legislation introduced this session to improve access to pregnancy-related healthcare access upon release in HB0524/SB0255, and if needed, access to mental health and substance use disorder treatment. It is the intent of this legislation to also apply to pregnant youth in the care and custody of the Department of Juvenile Services. We strongly recommend that SB0769 contain language reflecting goals of HB0524/SB0255 to ensure parity, and we stand ready to assist the bill sponsor if requested. For these reasons, NARAL Pro-Choice Maryland urges a favorable committee report on **SB0769**. Thank you for your time and consideration.

ⁱ "Women's Pre-Release Facility." mdjusticeproject. Accessed February 14, 2020. <https://www.marylandjusticeproject.org/women-s-pre-release-facility>

ⁱⁱ Initiative, Prison Policy. "The Gender Divide: Tracking Women's State Prison Growth." The Gender Divide: Tracking women's state prison growth | Prison Policy Initiative. Accessed February 14, 2020. https://www.prisonpolicy.org/reports/women_overtime.html

ⁱⁱⁱ Initiative, Prison Policy. "Who's Helping the 1.9 Million Women Released from Prisons and Jails Each Year?" Prison Policy Initiative. Accessed February 15, 2020. <https://www.prisonpolicy.org/blog/2019/07/19/reentry/>

DJS_INFO_SB769

Uploaded by: Johnston, James

Position: INFO

Boyd K. Rutherford
Lt. GovernorLarry Hogan
GovernorSam Abed
Secretary

DATE: March 3, 2020
Bill Number: SB 769 - Department of Juvenile Services - Juvenile Strategic Reentry Program
DJS Position: Letter of Information

The Department of Juvenile Services (DJS or department) is providing information for SB 769.

SB 769 codifies current DJS policy and processes regarding juvenile re-entry strategic planning. DJS has already implemented focused efforts to assist with this transition by executing five key goals:

1. Reduce recidivism by providing supervision to all youth returning home from committed care.
2. Families of committed youth are engaged at all key case planning decision points.
3. All committed youth needing educational services are connected to local education resources.
4. All committed youth are introduced to career development resources.
5. All youth in need of behavioral or somatic health services are connected to local resources to provide continuity of care.

The current DJS re-entry process is managed by a team of regional re-entry specialists. Their primary function is to increase communication among those stakeholders who are essential to the youths' success from initial placement to their return home. These stakeholders include schools, community partners, law enforcement, and other public agencies to coordinate services and resources. The re-entry teams meet with the youth and their family 45 days prior to release. During this time, the youth's housing plan, educational/ occupational needs, ongoing behavioral/somatic health service requirements, and family relationships are reviewed to ensure that treatment and services are not interrupted. Families of committed youth are invited to and encouraged to participate in the re-entry planning process, which is a key area for family engagement.

After the youth has been in the community for 30 days, a DJS re-entry specialist follows up to assure that the youth has accessed all needed services, has successfully re-enrolled in their local public school if needed, and has remained in stable housing. Unlike the language in the bill, the DJS strategic re-entry plan allows caseworkers to slowly decrease the time between meetings to gradually reduce DJS involvement when appropriate.

The Department utilizes the re-entry coordinators in each of the six DJS regions who serve as liaisons between case managers, local schools and community resources to fully implement the five re-entry goals. These goals emphasize DJS, family, and community service provider engagement and interaction to increase communication among those most essential to our youths' success during the placement and community re-entry process.

Re-Entry and Aftercare

While approximately 35,000 youth are processed every year at the DJS's intake centers throughout Maryland, only about 2,000 of those youth will eventually be ordered by a court to receive treatment in a facility either in Maryland or in another state. At some point, those 2,000 youths will complete their respective treatment programs and return to their communities.

What Is Re-Entry and Aftercare?

Re-entry and Aftercare are a collection of programs and policies designed to assist youth in their transition to life back in their community after they have completed court-ordered treatment.

Why Is Re-Entry and Aftercare Important?

Recent research has shown that effective and timely re-entry and aftercare programs increase the success rate for youth when they return to the community by providing continued counseling, services and employment training and assistance. These efforts help the youth continue his or her progress and avoid getting in more trouble.