

THE COALITION TO PROTECT MARYLAND'S CHILDREN

Our Mission: To combine and amplify the power of organizations and citizens working together to keep children safe from abuse and neglect. We strive to secure the budgetary and public policy resources to make meaningful and measurable improvements in safety, permanence, and well-being.

Judicial Proceedings Committee
SB 905- Juvenile Services - Workgroup to Develop Evidence-Based, Research-Based, and
Culturally Competent Practices
SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENTS

March 3, 2021

The Coalition to Protect Maryland's Children (CPMC)¹ is a consortium of Maryland organizations and individuals formed in 1996 to promote meaningful child welfare reform and the prevention of child abuse and neglect.. CPMC supports with amendments the passage of SB905.

SB 905 acknowledges that the State's youth services as a whole must be capable of effectively rehabilitating youth from diverse backgrounds and that providing culturally sensitive policies and practices are essential to prepare youth upon their release from the system.

While we agree with the premise of the bill, it is our position that the bill should be amended to include **"evidence-informed"** practices as well. As solely relying on evidence-based practices is severely limiting and eliminates the flexibility to develop innovative responses, particularly in culturally specific community based programs.

In addition, we ask that you reconsider the research entity, Maryland Public Policy Institute for handling the research this bill requires. The Maryland Public Policy Institute is an extremely conservative research entity, in particular this entity recently published an article, "Our Equity Obsession Can Cost Lives." To frame focusing on equity as a current obsession is problematic and we are not confident that the entity will center equity in it's research to locate and recommend culturally responsive programs. Centering equity is imperative, specifically in this case children of color who are involved in the child welfare and youth justice systems at disproportionate rates and would benefit from targeted interventions.

We ask that this language is replaced with a more neutral research entity or housed within a public Maryland higher education institution.

For the reasons stated above, we ask the committee to issue a favorable report with amendments.