

Boyd K. Rutherford
Lt. Governor

Larry Hogan
Governor

Sam Abed
Secretary

DATE: March 10, 2022
Bill Number: HB 1142 - Department of Juvenile Services – Juvenile Offense Database
DJS Position: Letter of Information

The Department of Juvenile Services (DJS or Department) is providing information for HB 1142.

HB 1142 requires DJS and the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) to develop and maintain a database that would track the description, date and location of all offenses involving juveniles.

The database created by HB 1142 would make information available that is currently confidential.

A public database, which includes dates and locations of offenses, could provide enough information to allow juveniles, victims, and witnesses to be identified, raising concerns about public safety and the confidentiality. Due to the strict confidentiality laws involving juvenile court cases, no public-facing database currently exists.

Existing law allows for sharing case information with crime victims.

Under current law, prosecutors and DJS may already share information about a specific case with crime victims or with the crime victim's representative. Section 3-8A-27 of the Courts and Judicial Proceedings Article specifically allows information sharing with crime victims when requested, including notifying the victim or the victim's representative of a court date or case event. The law strikes a balance between juvenile confidentiality and information sharing with those impacted by allowing information sharing related to a specific case.

DJS recognizes the importance of the accessibility of data for effective decision-making and to protect public safety.

DJS is a data-driven agency with a focus on collecting and reporting out data that may inform policy and reform efforts. As one example, the Department reports out, through the annual Data Resource Guide¹ (DRG), state and county-level data on juvenile complaints, case dispositions, commitments, recidivism, and other key measures. DJS provides data detailed by age, race, gender, and jurisdiction. This data reported by DJS does not allow for the identification of youth or families served by the Department or information regarding crime victims or witnesses.

Additionally DJS, offers assistance, support, and information to all victims in order to help proceed through the juvenile justice system. In 2021, DJS added a new webpage² specific for victims, which provides information about the juvenile court system to ensure that victims are informed and aware of the rights afforded them under Maryland law, providing guidance, and personal support.

HB 1142 is inconsistent with existing interagency data integration systems.

Currently, the Child Juvenile & Adult Management System (CJAMS) is an application under development as part of MD THINK; this data-sharing platform will support each human services agency in MD and its residents. This bill would interfere with the implementation of these important technological improvements.

HB 1142 carries a high fiscal impact.

HB 1142 will require DJS to develop and maintain a secure database to interface with existing DJS data applications along with the AOC and other human services or public safety agencies that may house data. The department's fiscal analysis projects the cost to initially staff and develop such a database would be approximately \$1.1 million and \$900,000 each year thereafter for continued staffing and maintenance.

¹ <https://djs.maryland.gov/Pages/Data-Resource-Guides.aspx>

² <https://djs.maryland.gov/Pages/Victim-Services.aspx>