



OFFICE OF
THE STATE'S ATTORNEY
FOR DORCHESTER COUNTY

AMANDA R. LEONARD
STATE'S ATTORNEY

February 13, 2024

The Honorable Luke Clippinger & Members of the House Judiciary Committee
Taylor House Office Building, Room 101
6 Bladen St., Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Chairperson Clippinger and Judiciary Committee,

The Dorchester County State's Attorney's Office supports **House Bill 758- Crime of Violence-Second Degree Assault of a School Employee or Subcontractor**. It is the opinion of this office that Criminal Law Article §14-101 being amended to include second degree assault on a school employee as a crime of violence better protects educators and school personnel within the State.

As the law currently stands, Maryland prosecutors have significant limitations on charges that may be pursued against alleged juvenile offenders. Second Degree Assault, as defined in Criminal Law §3-203, is not a crime of violence, and as such not applicable as a charge against juveniles under the age of thirteen. As a result of the limitations imposed by the Juvenile Justice Reform Act, there have been numerous physical assaults against educators in Dorchester County in the past school-years that have essentially been cast aside with no real legal recourse. The hardworking educators who appear in our schools every day to enrich and better the lives of the next generation deserve better than what the statute currently allows.

I believe that the additional language suggested by HB 758 takes into account the desire to hold juveniles accountable for assaults committed on those educators and school personnel, without making an overarching change to the law and legislative intent of §14-101.

I support House Bill 758, and humbly request a favorable report from the committee.

Sincerely,

Amanda R. Leonard
State's Attorney
Dorchester County