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Baltimore and Harford Counties

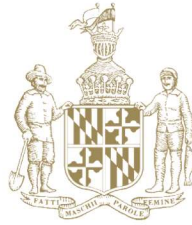
Budget and Taxation Committee

Subcommittees

Capital Budget

Health and Human Services

Legislative Policy Committee



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May 30, 2025

Sent via Electronic Mail

Secretary Vincent Schiraldi
Department of Juvenile Services
217 East Redwood Street
Baltimore, MD 21202

Re: Youth Detention Centers

Dear Secretary Schiraldi,

I'm extremely concerned regarding the recent reports of escalating violence within Maryland's juvenile detention facilities, particularly those incidents that have come to light at Green Ridge Youth Center, where half of the staff allegedly experienced injuries at the hands of juvenile criminals. These developments are disturbing, bringing into question the safety of the staff and youth as well as the efficacy of the current methods for rehabilitation.

As the State Senator for Legislative District 7, I am committed to ensuring that our juvenile services system holds youth accountable for their actions while also providing a path to rehabilitation. Accountability must be a foundational element of any system designed to protect public safety and foster personal responsibility. In light of recent reports detailing juvenile criminal assaults and growing safety concerns, I am seeking clarity on the specific steps the Department is taking to enforce consequences, prevent repeat offenses, and restore order within our facilities.

Specifically, I would appreciate your response to the following questions:


1. What immediate and long-term strategies are being implemented to mitigate juvenile crime in Maryland and ensure young people know that it is not acceptable to break the laws in place?
2. What protocol is in place when individuals in custody violently assault the staff at the juvenile detention facilities?
3. What supports, such as staffing increases, staff training, or mental health services, have been or will be introduced to prevent further incidents? What supports are needed to maintain the safety of the staff and youth?
4. Is there a statewide plan or task force addressing facility safety and youth behavioral health as part of a comprehensive violence prevention strategy?

Ensuring the safety of both staff and youth within our facilities must remain a central priority. Equally important is holding young offenders accountable for their actions in a manner that promotes real rehabilitation. Without accountability, we risk undermining both public trust and the potential for meaningful change in these youths' lives. I believe transparency and collaboration are essential to restoring confidence in our juvenile services

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system, and I welcome any opportunity to work with your department to understand the scope of the challenges and the solutions being implemented. At the end of the day, communities need to feel safe, and these young people need to understand the consequences of their actions while being given a path forward. Thank you for your attention to this critical matter. I look forward to your response and to continuing a dialogue that supports a safer and more effective juvenile justice system in Maryland.

Best Regards,

J.B. Sen. 
Senator J.B. Jennings