

Federal standards require that juveniles in adult facilities be kept from the “sight and sound” of incarcerated adults. The construction of facilities make this hard to achieve, so in many cases juveniles are kept in “restrictive housing,” which means they are locked in a cell, usually all but one hour per day. This is not punishment for violating a prison rule, which is a normal use of “restrictive housing.” Instead, this is the only way the prison can achieve the “sight and sound” standard.

Another important aspect of SB0296 is that it brings Maryland law into compliance with US national standards. As the 2025 [Commission on Juvenile Justice Reform and Emerging and Best Practices](#) points out, Maryland is the worst in the nation in the number of violations (over 1600) of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act. As the commission points out, most of these violations are due to the provisions of Maryland law that force jurisdictions to violate the federal standards. These provisions are precisely the ones that SB0296 brings up-to-date. Many other states have adopted these standards. Maryland should too.

The Maryland Alliance for Justice Reform is a nonpartisan, all-volunteer organization of nearly 2000 Marylanders who advocate for sensible, evidence-based legislative and policy changes in Maryland's correctional practices. MAJR thanks you for the opportunity to provide input on this important legislation and urges the committee to give SB0296 a favorable report.

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