

DEPARTMENT OF JUVENILE SERVICES

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"Together...ReShaping Young Lives"

Martin O'Malley
Governor

Anthony G. Brown
Lt. Governor

Donald W. DeVore
Secretary

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
News Release

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GOVERNOR SIGNS ESCAPE LEGISLATION ALLOWING THE RELEASE OF JUVENILE PHOTOS BY LAW ENFORCEMENT

BALTIMORE, MD (May 13, 2008) – Governor Martin O'Malley, signed legislation today sponsored by the Department of Juvenile Services which authorizes law enforcement officials to release photographs of juveniles who escape from juvenile detention centers and secure residential treatment facilities. House Bill 882, Juvenile Services-Release of Confidential Information, is progress towards the close collaborations needed between DJS and law enforcement to improve public safety.

Current law prohibits the release of any information concerning youth involved with or committed to the Department of Juvenile Services. House Bill 882 would allow the law enforcement agency investigating the escape of a youth who has been detained for allegedly committing an offense, or committed to a secure facility after they have been adjudicated delinquent for committing an offense, to release the photograph and identifying information of the juvenile to the public, including the media. This legislation will assist in facilitating the apprehension of the youth and ensure public safety.

"Public safety is the foundation of the quality of life we enjoy in Maryland and making our neighborhoods and communities more secure is a goal that all Marylanders share. It is undeniable that one of the most important duties of any government and, in fact, hardest challenges, is public safety," said Governor O'Malley. "This legislation will give the public sufficient notification so they can identify these youth for their precautions as well as offer assistance to law enforcement."

"House Bill 882 provides the collaboration with law enforcement that is necessary to identify who these youth are so they can be located quickly and safely returned to our custody," said the Secretary of the Department of Juvenile Services, Donald DeVore.

“Public safety is the foundation for all that we do in local government,” said Baltimore County Executive Jim Smith. “I applaud Governor O’Malley for the passage of this important legislation that will make Baltimore County safer. The Governor continues to focus on quality of life issues that families care about all across the State”.

“Being able to provide the name and photograph of a juvenile escapee to the media and the public increases the ability of law enforcement to locate an offender and return him or her to a safe environment as soon as possible,” Maryland State Police Superintendent, Colonel Terrence B. Sheridan said. “We believe this new law will reduce our search time, while increasing public safety and the safety of the juvenile escapee who remains at risk every moment he or she is away from custody.”

DJS has 8 detention centers: the Baltimore City Juvenile Justice Center, Charles H. Hickey, Jr. School, Cheltenham Youth Facility, Alfred D. Noyes Children's Center, the Western Maryland Children’s Center, the Lower Eastern Shore, J. DeWeese Carter Center and the Thomas J. S. Waxter Children's Center and one secure residential treatment facility, Victor Cullen Center, that will be covered in the event a youth absconds.

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