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# MARYLAND COALITION TO REFORM SCHOOL DISCIPLINE

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## HOUSE WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE HOUSE BILL 950: STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION – SCHOOL DISCIPLINE – DATA COLLECTION

FEBRUARY 28, 2019

POSITION: SUPPORT

The Maryland Coalition to Reform School Discipline (“CRSD”) brings together advocates, service providers, and concerned citizens interested in transforming school discipline practices within Maryland’s public school systems. We are committed to making discipline responsive to students’ behavioral needs fair, appropriate to the infraction, and designed to keep youth on track to graduate. **CRSD supports House Bill 950**, which imposes certain requirements regarding school discipline-related information, require a change to the disproportionality measure, and extend reporting of discipline data to include alternative schools and programs, public separate day schools and the Juvenile Services Education System.

The collection of quality discipline data is essential to identifying and addressing challenges and successes regarding exclusionary school discipline practices. In 2014, the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) passed new discipline regulations, which in part require the identification of schools that disproportionately suspend and expel students of color and students with disabilities.<sup>1</sup> As MSDE moves forward with implementing this regulation, it has not committed to making this disproportionality data publicly available. CRSD believes that data transparency is key to informing the public and ensuring accountability in mitigating issues associated with disproportionality.

HB 950 addresses concerns around school discipline data collection and dissemination, ensuring that this data is reported in an accessible format, allowing easy access for the community, advocates and researchers to drill down on specific areas of interest. It will ensure that school discipline data is disaggregated by subgroups that have historically been disproportionately impacted by out of school discipline practices. It sets clear definitions for reporting of “high suspending” schools, and requires a more progressive measure for identifying high suspending schools.

Finally, HB 950 closes a gap within our current school discipline data by requiring the collection of data for alternative schools and programs, public separate day schools, and the Juvenile Services Education System (which provides education to students with Department of Juvenile Services’ facilities). These schools and programs have previously been exempted from data collection,

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<sup>1</sup> “Reducing and Eliminating Disproportionate/Discrepant Impact,” COMAR 13A.08.01.21, <http://www.dsd.state.md.us/comar/comarhtml/13a/13a.08.01.21.htm>.

which provides an opportunity for punitive and exclusionary discipline practices to remain unabated.

CRSD firmly believes that the public has a right to school discipline data, especially as it impacts historically oppressed communities. This data must be made available to the community in a way that is clearly and easily understandable. Furthermore, this data must be captured for all public schools and programs serving Maryland students. With good data, our communities are better able to respond to problems facing individual schools and districts, as well as celebrate successes and identify potential model programming and practices.

**For these reasons, the CRSD supports House Bill 950.**

For more information contact:

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**CRSD Members**

ACLU-Maryland  
Advocates for Children and Youth  
The Arc Maryland  
Bazelon Center  
Bmore Awesome Inc.  
The Choice Program at UMBC  
Disability Rights Maryland  
Maryland Equity Project, University of Maryland  
Family League of Baltimore  
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