



OFFICES OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

Douglas M. Duncan
County Executive

May 11, 2005

Bruce Romer
Chief Administrative Officer

The Honorable Robert L. Ehrlich, Jr., Governor
State House
100 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Dear Governor Ehrlich:

I am writing this letter on behalf of the Montgomery County Criminal Justice Coordinating Commission to urge your approval of HB 802 - Juvenile Law - Competency. This legislation is needed to strengthen Maryland's protection for vulnerable youths in the State's juvenile justice system.

As you know, current Maryland law is vague and not effective on the issue of juvenile competency. By contrast with current laws regarding adults, there is no definition of incompetency nor is there a standard evaluation process for determining competency for juveniles. The result is that competency is not considered, if at all, until the juvenile trial. These clearly are serious shortcomings in our juvenile justice system that are severely disadvantaging some of our most vulnerable, at-risk youths.

HB 802 addresses these shortcomings and strengthens the integrity of the criminal justice system in the State by providing for a clear and consistent process for adjudicating competency for juveniles. This is an improvement that will protect both the safety of the general public as well as enhance the protection for the juveniles who become involved in the State's criminal justice system.

This legislation is urgently needed and the Montgomery County Criminal Justice Coordinating Commission strongly recommends your approval. If you are in need of further information, I can be reached at 301-519-5510 or at dkbusiness7@yahoo.com. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Dolores Kozloski, Chair
Montgomery County Criminal Justice
Coordinating Commission

cc: Douglas M. Duncan, County Executive
Criminal Justice Coordinating Commission Members



Criminal Justice Coordinating Commission

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