



COMMUNITY LAW IN ACTION

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## **Baltimore City Youth Jail: Frequent Questions and Answers**

### **Is the state building a new youth jail?**

- No, the state is retrofitting The Baltimore Pre Release Unit to house up to 60 youth automatically charged as adults that are currently being held in the Baltimore City Jail. The retrofit was a plan proposed by the state in January 2013 as an alternative to building a new \$104 million, 180 bed jail for youth charged as adults, which was proposed by Governor O'Malley in 2010.

### **Will the retrofitted facility add beds to the Department of Public Safety Correctional Services capacity?**

- The retrofit project will not add additional beds to Department of Public Safety Correctional Services capacity. In fact, the renovation will reduce DPSCS total bed space by 140.

### **Will the retrofitted facility only be used for youth automatically charged as adults?**

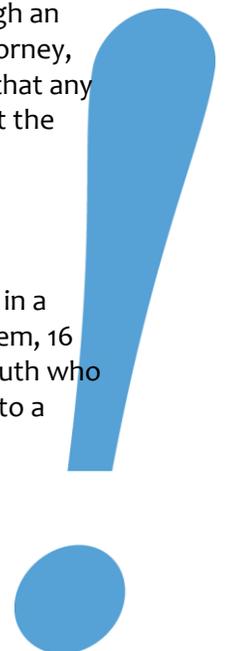
- No. Unlike the originally proposed facility, this facility can be used for any specialized population. Once the law that allows youth to be automatically charged as adults is repealed, DPSCS can put older, sick or sentenced inmates in that facility.

### **Aren't most of the youth charged as adults held at the Baltimore City Juvenile Justice Center?**

- The majority of youth are held at the Baltimore City Juvenile Justice Center though an agreement that was created between DPSCS, DJS, the Baltimore City State's Attorney, the Maryland Office of the Public Defender and the Baltimore City Court stating that any youth who is transferable and can't pay their bail or is given no bail will be held at the Baltimore City Juvenile Justice Center (BCJJC) prior to their transfer hearing.

### **Why are there still youth at the Baltimore City Jail?**

- Under current state law there are some youth who are **NEVER** eligible to be held in a juvenile facility: youth who are waived from the juvenile system to the adult system, 16 and 17 year olds charged with murder, youth previously convicted as an adult, youth who (after a transfer) have their cases heard in the adult system, or youth sentenced to a term of incarceration in the adult system.



### **What can the money for the youth retrofit be used for?**

- This project is in the state of Maryland's capital budget, so the money can only be reallocated to another capital project. The capital budget can only be used for construction and is built with bond money. The money can't be used for operating funds for any youth programming. Operating dollars are collected from taxes and are used to pay for programming. For more information about Maryland's budget process, [check out this resource](#) from the Department of Legislative Services.

### **How do we stop the jail?**

- [Join us](#) to help us stop automatically charging youth as adults! Until the law is changed the state can continue to say they need the facility for youth who are automatically charged as adults and held in adult jail pre-trial.

### **How does the new legislation that was just signed into law removing youth automatically charged as adults from adult jails affect the construction of the Baltimore City youth jail?**

- This bill put into law the agreement made in Baltimore City and will remove hundreds of youth from adult jails across that state (except those youth listed in the exception above). In order to completely negate the need for the jail, the law allowing for the automatic charging of youth as adults must be repealed.

### **How is a youth automatically charged as an adult?**

- A young person between the ages of 14-17 is automatically charged as an adult if they are accused of one of 33 offenses. A judge does not review the case; the automatic charge is solely based on age and accusations. To see the full list of offences, visit [our website](#).