



## **OFFICIAL STATEMENT**

# **BALTIMORE COUNTY DEMOCRATIC PARTY CONDEMNS JAIL CONDITIONS FOR JUVENILES**

The official Democratic Party credo states that we seek to build "a society where we recognize that the strengthening of the family and the protection of children are essential to the health of the nation" and "where a sound education, proper nutrition, quality medical care, affordable housing, safe streets and a healthy environment are possible for every citizen." The Baltimore County Democratic Party (BCDP) is steadfast in our commitment to the protection of the children of Baltimore County and recognize that it is a moral imperative to safeguard our youngest residents from harm. The BCDP cannot in good conscience stay silent in the wake of reports of children held in appalling conditions at the Baltimore County Detention Center.

Baltimore County detains more children in its adult facility than any other jurisdiction in Maryland. It is alarming to learn that the Baltimore County judicial system continues to house children at the Baltimore County Detention Center despite the law mandating that they be held in juvenile detention facilities and despite the warden's warning that the jail is not built to house children. The Office of the Public Defender has alleged that children are not being completely separated from adults, as required by federal law, and also has alleged that children are being held in solitary confinement, defined by the United Nations as a form of torture and violation of human rights. It has also been alleged that the Detention Center is not providing children with adequate education and healthcare.

**We condemn the cruel practice of housing children in adult facilities with full knowledge of these conditions.** This deliberate traumatization of the children of our community does nothing to enhance public safety and fails to live up to the moral and ethical standards of the Democratic Party and the American people. We have not forgotten that the U.S. Constitution forbids cruel and unusual punishment.

**We officially call on the State's Attorney's office to:** (1) immediately request the transfer of all juveniles to juvenile facilities; and (2) reach a Memorandum of Understanding with the Office of the Public Defender to hold all youth charged as adults in juvenile facilities.

**We call on Maryland Attorney General's Office and United States Department of Justice to launch a full and thorough independent investigation into the policies, practices and conditions of the Baltimore County Department of Corrections and State's Attorney Office to:** (1) uncover the unbiased truth of the situation; and (2) restore public trust and confidence in the Baltimore County legal justice system.

The BCDP takes these allegations seriously and remains firmly committed to holding the State's Attorney's Office accountable. We must establish truth, fight for justice, and lead with empathy.