



Welcome to the May [Youth Rights & Safety Hub](#) (YRSH) newsletter! YRSH is non-political and non-partisan. We seek to educate, not advocate. We do this by sharing relevant resources and data debriefs about youth rights and safety issues in our state.

Is youth crime down in Baltimore? So far this year, yes. On May 13, a Department of Juvenile Services (DJS) official shared year-to-date data with the Baltimore City Council Public Safety Committee showing that complaints against youth ages 17 and younger during the first four months of 2025 (Jan 1 - May 6) were down 24% compared to the same time last year. Violent complaints were down even more — by 52%. You can watch the full presentation [here](#) (data presented at 1:54:20).

This positive news—combined with [2024's 74% decrease](#) in homicides and shootings of youth 17 and younger—provides strong evidence that violence reduction efforts are working.

Spotlight

The Department of Juvenile Services' FY 2024 Data Research Guide

The city council's "sneak peek" at current Maryland youth justice data was a rare event. Officially, DJS publishes its data only once a year, in a comprehensive report called the [Data Resource Guide](#) (DRG). The most recent DRG, covering fiscal year 2024 (from July 1, 2023 through June 30, 2024), was released in early 2025. Because almost no one has time or capacity to review nearly 300 pages of charts, graphs and text, YRSH has published a short overview of the DRG—with key highlights from the FY 2024 numbers.

[CLICK HERE TO READ OUR IN-DEPTH ANALYSIS OF THE 2024 DRG](#)

What do regular people think about youth safety? We got a rare glimpse at the second annual Public Safety Town Hall hosted by the Baltimore City State's Attorney's Office on May 20, 2025. Media coverage of the event failed to cover the questions and concerns brought by residents, and instead repeated old, inflammatory narratives. But as this [Fox45-edited video of](#)

[the event](#) shows, questions and comments from the community focused almost exclusively on the need to expand services to meet youth and family needs without having to rely on police, prosecutors, or punishment. Key highlights:

- A woman who could not get help for a foster child: "I've called all the way to the top for this one child, saying, 'He's either going to be incarcerated or dead. I need help.' He is now incarcerated, and only because he did not get the help that I saw that this young man needed." (1:23:00)
- A young woman who asks, "Why do you all think that locking us up is going to do something...? - (1:42:44)
- A community activist, standing beside a teen she rescued from crisis days earlier, appealing for assistance: "It's a hard thing to hear a child cry and say they don't want to live." (1:48:50)

None of the residents who spoke asked for harsher penalties for youth, or more police presence. They asked for community investment, recreation centers, behavioral and mental health services for youth, and support for parents and guardians of young people with high needs.

Could decisions in Washington undermine Baltimore's [historic drop in homicides](#)? In late April, the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) abruptly cancelled [\\$811 million in public safety grants](#)—including nearly [\\$170 million in youth justice programming](#) and [at least three Baltimore grants focused on reducing gun violence](#). The action was almost immediately met with a [class action lawsuit](#). But even if those grants are someday restored, other other changes coming out of the nation's capital could impact existing reform initiatives. These include an executive order promising to "unleash high-impact local police forces" and changes at the DOJ Civil Rights Division that [threaten the future of the Baltimore consent decree](#) initiated following the death of Freddie Gray ten years ago.

YRSH will be watching the numbers and reporting—accurately—about what happens.

In The News

- [Safe Streets says it's seeing success. Can the anti-violence effort survive funding cuts?](#), by Tom Hall, Teria Rogers, & Sam Bermas-Dawes, WYPR, May 9, 2025.
- [Baltimore high schoolers discussed the issues that mattered to them. As they prepare to graduate, we check back in](#), by Tom Hall, Teria Rogers, & Sam Bermas-Dawes, WYPR, May 6, 2025.

- [Local Theater Brings Pilot Art Program to Baltimore City Juvenile Justice Center](#), by Sophia Thornberg, The Greyhound, May 4, 2025.
- [Exodus at ... DOJ threatens to unravel Baltimore's federal police oversight](#), by Ben Conarck, The Baltimore Banner, May 7, 2025.
- ...[Massive Blow to Youth Justice Programs](#), by Nell Bernstein, The Imprint, April 29, 2025.
- [A Bluesky thread](#) of Letters to the Editor and other social commentary—over the decades, and going back to Aristotle and Socrates—showing “more discipline” for youth is an age old complaint.

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