



County Executive John R. Leopold
P.O. Box 2700, Annapolis, MD 21404

July 6, 2009

Hon. Adrian M Fenty
Executive Office of the Mayor
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Suite 316
Washington, DC 20004

Dear Mayor Fenty:

It is with great concern that I write on behalf of residents in the Anne Arundel County area surrounding the District's New Beginnings Youth Center. The escape of six inmates from the facility on Sunday marks the second time since the Center opened in June that juvenile offenders have broken out and roamed free in the community. A press report about the most recent incident noted that "four of the youths were recently involved in a fracas at a juvenile detention center in Arizona and had recently been transported back to the D.C. area." Most troubling about this report was that these youths were obviously not sufficiently supervised upon their detention at New Beginnings even after their apparent escape attempt at the airport.

Since becoming County Executive, I have consistently supported efforts to relocate District youths to a facility within their own community. Such relocation would facilitate family visits and allow for a smoother transition back to their relatives and neighborhoods. Until such time as that can be accomplished, it is imperative that residents around this Center are protected from potential public safety threats from youths who have escaped. Citizens must have confidence that a juvenile justice facility not subject to supervision by Maryland authorities is properly monitored and has sufficient security to deter escapes. Clearly, the Center's security response following the June incident was inadequate.

I would welcome the opportunity to be briefed on your efforts to better secure this Center, including elements of a security envelope designed to deter escapes and improve staff discoveries of escape attempts in progress, and would work with you to communicate these new security efforts to the surrounding communities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John R. Leopold".

JOHN R. LEOPOLD
County Executive

cc: Hon. Benjamin L. Cardin
Hon. Barbara A. Mikulski
Hon. C. A. Dutch Ruppertsberger, III
Hon. John Sarbanes
Anne Arundel County Council
Anne Arundel County Delegation