



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

July 8, 2009

Hon. Barbara A. Mikulski
60 West Street, Suite 202
Annapolis, MD 21401

Hon. John Sarbanes
Arundel Center
44 Calvert Street, Suite 349
Annapolis, MD 21401

Hon. Benjamin L. Cardin
200 South Charles Street
Baltimore, MD 21201

Barbara, Ben and John
Dear Senators Mikulski and Cardin and Congressman Sarbanes:

On numerous occasions over the last several years, we have had the opportunity to discuss the continuing problems caused by the location of the District of Columbia's youth facility in Western Anne Arundel County. I have appreciated your efforts to relocate that facility back to the District and have shared your frustration at not being able to accomplish that goal. Unfortunately, our difficulties with that site as the Oak Hill Center have continued unabated as it has been transitioned to the New Beginnings Youth Development Center.

Since opening in June, New Beginnings has seen two successful escapes, the most recent involving multiple offenders with serious juvenile records. I know you also share my alarm at the media video that depicted damage from the "riot" that preceded this last escape.

Our citizens who live in the communities surrounding this facility have the right to insist upon adequate security that will significantly reduce the possibility of escape as well as definitive procedures for civilian notification and law enforcement intervention once an escape has been discovered. Since New Beginnings is located on property not currently subject to either State or County jurisdiction, I believe that we should work together to ensure appropriate Congressional oversight of this Center. This oversight should include the potential for federal legislation that would help protect communities surrounding the Center.

I look forward to our continued cooperation in the effort to return these youths to a facility closer to their homes or, in the absence of such relocation, appropriate protections for our constituents that live in this area.

Sincerely,

JOHN R. LEOPOLD
County Executive