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Baltimore Expands Youth Programs After Teen Arrest

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Baltimore officials are stepping up efforts to keep young people off the streets after a 13-year-old girl was arrested for an attempted armed robbery, underscoring rising juvenile crime during the summer months.

Police say the incident happened Friday night inside a downtown liquor store. Surveillance footage revealed the young suspect filling a container with alcohol before brandishing a knife in an apparent effort to leave without paying. Officers took her into custody and

transferred her to a juvenile justice center. The case reflects broader concerns about youth crime escalating when school is out of session.

Stefanie Mavronis, director of the Mayor’s Office of Neighborhood Safety and Engagement (MONSE), emphasized the need for proactive solutions. “We know in the summer we tend to see increases in violence. We’ve seen a couple of high-profile instances involving our young people in the summer months in years past,” Mavronis said. MONSE aims to connect teenagers with constructive activities, including events at Druid Hill Park and midnight basketball leagues hosted by the Department of Recreation and Parks. The goal is to steer youth away from criminal behavior by offering safe alternatives.

Alongside local initiatives, the Maryland Department of Juvenile Services (DJS) has introduced policies targeting repeat offenders. Under the new guidelines, any juvenile arrested while wearing an electronic monitoring device can be detained until their next court appearance. Brant Fisher, president of the Southeast Community Relations Council, described this step as a necessary measure to restore public safety. Ideally, I think we still want to see the State’s Attorney’s Office involved in part of that process. And while the juveniles are being held for that period because, you know, overall it helps public safety, which is a component I think we’ve been lacking for the last couple of years,” Fisher explained.

While Baltimore leadership often focuses on long-term prevention, many residents believe that accountability and enforcement must play a stronger role in curbing violence. Mavronis agreed that repeated criminal activity among juveniles cannot be ignored. “When we see young people becoming repeat offenders, that has to make us double down on our work to make sure they’re not getting ensnared in the criminal justice system in the first place,” she said.

As the city continues to grapple with youth crime, officials argue that a balanced approach combining intervention, recreation, and firm consequences is necessary to protect communities and give young people a chance to choose a different path.

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