



## The League of Women Voters of Delaware Urges Release of HB 308

### The League of Women Voters of Delaware urges the House Judiciary Committee to release HB 308 and to work for its speedy enactment.

HB 308 removes the sunset provision date in the state's civil citation statute, allowing the program to continue.

Our Juvenile Civil Citation Program is a statewide civil alternative to the formal arrest and criminal prosecution of youth under 18 who commit certain low-level misdemeanor offenses. Its primary purpose is to prevent further delinquency, and appropriately address participating youth offenses without creating a criminal record. The program offers law enforcement the option of issuing the youth a civil citation in lieu of arrest.<sup>1</sup>

During the 90-day program period, participating youth are required to contact pre-assigned community providers to complete an assessment to identify their risk and needs. They also must complete five (5) hours of community service, write a letter of apology, and work towards reducing potential future contact with the juvenile justice system.<sup>2</sup>

According to the first annual report covering Spring – December 2017,<sup>3</sup> Juvenile Civil Citation has achieved:

- ✓ 358 referrals - Average age of referrals – 14.4
- ✓ 86% Successful completion rate

Of the 358 referrals:

- ✓ Disorderly Conduct made up 62%
- ✓ Possession of Marijuana made up 33%
- ✓ 35% were white
- ✓ 65% were non-white
- ✓ 58% were referred from New Castle County
- ✓ 16% from Kent County and
- ✓ 24% from Sussex County

In such a short time, this program has achieved excellent results, saving the state the costs associated with court appearances, possible detention, and especially the risk of turning these young people into more dangerous future criminals. **HB 308 absolutely merits enactment!**

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<sup>1</sup> <http://kids.delaware.gov/yrs/juvenile-civil-citation.shtml>

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> <http://kids.delaware.gov/pdfs/yrs-jcc-annual-report-spring-2017.pdf>