



August 16th, 2023

Dear Dewey Beach Town Council,

The National Youth Rights Association believes that it would be a serious mistake to enact a curfew for minors and urges you not to do so.

A curfew is a status offense that punishes youth for simply being who they are. Whether they are traveling home from a friend's house, running an errand, enjoying a late night walk, or exercising their 1st Amendment right to assembly, young people can be punished for doing nothing wrong.

Studies from Washington DC and Maryland show that curfews have at best little to no effect on crime, and at worst, can actually increase it. An existing curfew at Atlantic Station did nothing to save the life of Zyion Charles, and the existing curfew in Chicago did nothing to save the life of Seandell Holliday.

<https://www.youthrights.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/The-Effect-of-a-Curfew-Law-on-Juvenile-Crime-in-Washington-DC-pdf-1.jpg>

<https://marginalrevolution.com/marginalrevolution/2015/12/do-juvenile-curfews-increase-crime.html>

Has Dewey Beach presented any statistical data to meet the constitutional scrutiny required? Curfews allow law enforcement to profile and stop whoever they want, because they look underage or are simply out at night. Rather than adding this harmless behavior to the long list of laws which must be enforced, it's best to focus on real crime and public safety.

Sincerely,

Neil Bhateja
Board Member
National Youth Rights Association

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