



To: Committee Chair, Judicial Proceedings
From: Maryland Youth Justice Coalition
Re: SB 314, Juveniles Charged as Adults - Confidentiality of Records
Date: February 11, 2020
Position: Support SB 314

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on SB 314, Juveniles Charged as Adults - Confidentiality of Records. The Maryland Youth Justice Coalition SUPPORTS this bill.

In a 2014 report¹ researchers found that black boys are viewed as both older and more culpable than white peers, even when those children are as young as 10 years of age. This report, published by the American Psychological Association, contains the results of researchers surveying both mostly white, male police officers approximately 37 years of age in large urban areas and mostly white, female university students at large public universities. The women on average overestimated the age of black males over the age of 10 by 4 ½ years. These young youth of color were also found to be at greater risk of police violence if accused of a crime based on the surveys done of the police officers.

A 2015 report by Color for Change² that studied local crime reporting in NYC found that local news stations represented about 3 out of every 4 offenders as black – 75% – when the NYPD arrest rate was actually about 50% black persons. This overrepresentation of reporting on black arrestees distorts the truth and generates the erroneous public opinion that black people are arrested and offend at greater rates than white people.

¹ “The Essence of Innocence: Consequences of Dehumanizing Black Children,” *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, published online Feb. 24, 2014; Phillip Atiba Goff, PhD, and Matthew Christian Jackson, PhD; University of California, Los Angeles; Brooke Allison, PhD, and Lewis Di Leone, PhD, National Center for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, Boston; Carmen Marie Culotta, PhD, Pennsylvania State University; and Natalie Ann DiTomasso, JD, University of Pennsylvania.

² “Not To Be Trusted: Dangerous Levels of Inaccuracy in TV Crime Reporting in NYC,” published online March, 2015 colorofchange.org, <https://s3.amazonaws.com/s3.colorofchange.org/images/ColorOfChangeNewsAccuracyReportCardNYC.pdf>





Similarly in Maryland, the news media contributes to both the implicit and explicit bias of people in their reporting on youth charged as adults by regularly publishing the names and photographs of youth charged as adults on their websites, papers and television screens.

Besides the troubling bias being unnecessarily created and/or reinforced, the fact is Marylanders are no safer if they have a name and image of an individual arrested for an alleged offense. What is important to convey to the public is that an alleged offense occurred and that a person or persons were arrested or need to be apprehended.

SB 314 preserves for our youth charged as adults the presumption of innocence and the degree of confidentiality commensurate with their young age. It extends existing juvenile confidentiality law to youth charged as adults pending the outcome of a determination on whether they will be tried in the juvenile or adult system. This bill carefully balances the needs of public safety and allows for the release of information if there is a young person that the police are seeking to apprehend for an offense for which a youth can be charged as an adult.

We urge this committee to issue a favorable report on SB 314.

Respectfully Submitted,

Ashley DeVaughn on behalf of the Maryland Youth Justice Coalition
Youth Justice Policy Director, Advocates for Children and Youth
410-547-9200 x3007

