



VISION - BRIDGE Maryland sees the state challenged by a history of inequity but engaged in community organizing for a more just tomorrow.

MISSION - BRIDGE Maryland uses intentional relationship building, organizing and intensive leadership development in order to strengthen congregations and faith leaders to demonstrate and advance justice in the world.

February 12, 2020

I grew up watching TV shows like Andy Griffin and Chips (California Highway Patrol); and looking at commercials like Officer Friendly and McGruff the dog. I felt like law enforcement was my friend and my advocate. I could trust that they had my self-interest at heart. However, fast forward 20 years we now see programs like Law and Order, The Closer, and COPS that depicts law enforcement and states attorneys as less than friendly. Their motivation is convictions and guilty until proven innocent. And let's not forget social media that captures law enforcement by a few bad apples, as a rotten bunch. HB624 is puts officer friendly, and McGruff back in the Interrogation room because there are advocates and attorneys that are there for OUR children.

After a long debate with a former states attorney who didn't feel that Maryland had a problem with how juveniles are treated by law enforcement, he had to admit one thing. Having someone in the room that the child knew was there on their behalf would be comforting for the child. This bill is about the balance of getting the truth and caring for OUR child.

Former President Hubert Humphrey is quoted as saying, "The moral test of government is how that government treats those who are in the dawn of life, the children;

Likewise, BRIDGE Maryland, Inc. also offers this moral imperative from member faith institutions. Minors are Vulnerable, Influenced by authority, Immature and at risk of emotional, cultural and situation trauma well into their adulthood. Our sacred texts from descendants of Abraham, teaches us that children are an inheritance from God (Psalm 127:3-5). There is still adult responsibility needed, even in the presence of wrongdoing and chastisement (Proverbs 17:6). The Intergenerational value in our children must be recognized and respected; thus, an adult must be present. Likewise, God wants our children treated justly (Exodus 22:22-23) and to treat children in callous, disposable ways, affects a child's future and offends the Creator of us all (Matthew 18:10).

I ask that you vote in favor of HB627.

Sincerely,

Rev. Marlon Tilghman,
Delegate, Co-Chair of BRIDGE Maryland, Inc. Criminal Justice and Education Taskforce