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TESTIMONY ON SB93 - FAVORABLE

Criminal Procedure – Youth Equity and Safty Act

TO: Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee

FROM: Camilla Day

My name is Camilla Day, and I am testifying in favor of SB93 including with any sponsor amendments, as a resident of Montgomery County’s District 17 and a member of Adat Shalom Reconstructionist Congregation in Bethesda, MD.

As a mother I am well aware that children, even teenage children, are not young adults but developing young people who need to be treated as such. Unfortunately, current Maryland law requires youth as young as 14 to be automatically prosecuted in adult court for 33 designated offenses.

Per capita, Maryland sends more children to adult court based on offense type than any other state except Alabama. Moreover, 81% of youth charged in adult court in Maryland are Black.

In 2021, Maryland sent more kids to adult court than California, Pennsylvania and Arizona combined! This needs to change and SB93 will do that.

In addition, this bill will help keep our communities safer. Studies have shown and experts agree that youth charged in adult court are almost 34% MORE likely to be rearrested with more serious offenses as compared to youth whose cases were heard in juvenile court for the same charges.

I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report for SB93.