

February 13, 2022
David M. Friedman
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TESTIMONY ON SB0052 - POSITION: UNFAVORABLE
Juvenile Justice Restoration Act of 2024

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

FROM: David M. Friedman

My name is David Friedman. I am a resident of District 14 in Colesville/Cloverly. I am submitting this testimony against SB0052, Juvenile Justice Restoration Act of 2024.

I am an active member of Oseh Shalom, a Jewish Reconstructionist congregation located in Laurel, MD. Jewish tradition emphasizes that the Divine encompasses both justice and mercy and that all of us deserve a life with dignity, respect and safety. I also closely followed the testimony, compelling stories, and research that resulted in passage of the Juvenile Justice Reform Act (JJRA) and the Child Interrogation Protection Act (CIPA) in 2022 (JJRA took effect in June, CIPA in October). These actions were informed by evidence and best practices to combat juvenile crime by addressing the racial disparities and poor outcomes of overly punitive approaches. SB0052 is an effort driven entirely by fear and hyperbole to roll back youth justice reforms only recently enacted by the General Assembly without any solid evidence, a step backward in achieving the common goal of improving public safety for everyone.

Efforts to modify JJRA by expanding jurisdiction of juvenile court beyond 10-12 year olds charged with a crime of violence to include those alleged to have committed a crime involving the use or possession of a firearm OR *any* crime if the child has been arrested on two prior occasions flies in the face of recommendations from the [Juvenile Justice Reform Council](#) (see p. 19). In addition, SB0052's stipulation that parents, guardians, or custodians of a child can consent to the custodial interrogation of a child without the child's consultation with an attorney is simply insufficient protection for the human rights of children. Studies show that children make better decisions with legal support. I believe the public interest is best served when accountability interventions help young offenders to recognize the harm they have inflicted, take responsibility for their actions, and change their behavior.

SB0052 mistakenly equates more accountability with increased punishment and is sponsored by prosecutors and lawmakers who scapegoat Black children rather than nurture them as the divine beings we know all children are. **I respectfully urge this committee to return an unfavorable report on SB0052.**