

Bill#052_AnitaLampel_UNFAV

Date of Hearing: 2/13/2024

Anita Lampel
Bethesda, MD, 20817

TESTIMONY ON SB#052 - POSITION: UNFAVORABLE
Juvenile Justice Restoration Act of 2024

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

FROM: Anita Lampel

OPENING: My name is Anita Lampel. I am a resident of District 16. I am submitting this testimony against SB#052, Juvenile Justice Restoration Act of 2024.

I am a retired Child and Adolescent Psychologist, headed a Child Adolescent Mental Health Program for a county, was a court-appointed expert in numerous cases involving children and teens in the criminal and dependency courts, and helped draft legislation. Currently I am a member of Adat Shalom Reconstructionist Congregation and the Women's Democratic Club of Montgomery County. I have followed Maryland's troubled history of working with children and teens accused of crimes, noted with deep sadness the disproportionate numbers of young Black youth in the system, and felt shame that Maryland stands at the bottom, next to Alabama, in the percentages of young Black men incarcerated.

Just last year the Legislature acted appropriately, responsibly, and in accordance with 20 years of research and data from other jurisdictions, to put reasonable reforms into place. Now you want to undo it! Let me discuss just one of the provisions you plan to put in place to show how faulty and hostile to children this new legislation is.

A prepubertal child, just 10-years-old, can be sent to the juvenile justice system for 3rd degree sexual assault. I will tell you from my extensive work with children who are victims of sexual molestation that the **ONLY WAY** a child this age acts out sexually is because she or he was the **VICTIM** of sexual, severe psychological, and/or physical abuse. This child needs help, support, therapy, love. This child does not deserve to be treated as a criminal, go to court, be branded doubly—once as a sexual predator and then as a criminal.

I respectfully urge this committee to return an unfavorable report on SB#052.

Following the above introductory paragraph, in this paragraph you should describe who you are, what synagogue or other organizations you belong to, not including JUFJ. It is actually more powerful not to list JUFJ since we will also be submitting separate JUFJ testimony. Share why you care about the bill -- mention your values, Jewish tradition, moral framework, personal experience with the issue, professional expertise, etc. that guide your viewpoint.

Use the body paragraphs to more fully present your personal story, how it relates to the proposed bill, and how passing or rejecting the bill will improve the lives of people in Maryland. What do you think will be fixed/broken by passing this bill? What would have been different, positively or negatively, if this bill had been a law when your personal story occurred? In total, your testimony should be roughly a page, so you don't need to add a ton of detail.

NOTE: Rebutting opposition arguments draws attention away from our coalitions' messages and can inadvertently amplify the opposition. We suggest you keep your testimony focused on our coalition's talking points and not focus on rebutting the opposition's talking points.

The closing paragraph should reiterate your position on the bill. Explain why you think the bill will be effective/ineffective, outcomes that the bill will achieve, etc. This does not need to be long. End with: **I respectfully urge this committee to return a (favorable/favorable with amendments/unfavorable) report on HB#/SB#.**