



TESTIMONY TO THE SENATE JUDICIAL PROCEEDINGS COMMITTEE

SB 601– Minors Convicted as Adults - Sentencing - Transfer to Juvenile Court

POSITION: Favorable

BY: Linda Kohn, President

Date: February 22, 2024

The League of Women Voters of Maryland expresses strong endorsement for Maryland Senate Bill 601. The League of Women Voters believes this legislation is pivotal in addressing minors being convicted as adults. Its passage will significantly contribute to the welfare and progress of our state.

The League of Women Voters has a long-standing position to juvenile corrections and how the handling of it affects not only children, but all of Maryland. Since 1972 LWVMD has committed to the idea that juveniles deserve individually designed training and treatment programs and local or regional diagnostic services for juvenile offenders, and the use of specialized judges, counseling services and administration of juvenile cases all geared to dealing with families. SB 601 aligns with these principles by allowing individualized sentencing of juveniles, with all the options that are available in Juvenile Court.

The provisions of SB1 reflect a steadfast commitment to addressing persistent systemic inequities. Highlighting the urgency, according to Governor's of Office Crime Prevention, Youth and Victim Services, 396 juveniles were charged as adults in Maryland in 2022, with 91.9% being male and 93.9% between the ages of 16 and 17. Maryland Senate Bill 601 offers an opportunity to address these concerns and enhance an equitable process through our judicial system.

The League of Women Voters of Maryland strongly encourages a favorable report for SBI 601.