

Date of Hearing 2/13/2024

Emily C. Blank
Brentwood, MD

TESTIMONY ON SBI 20 EmilyBlank - POSITION:/UNFAVORABLE
Juvenile Law-Custodial Interrogation-Parental Consultation

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

FROM: Emily C. Blank

My name is Emily Blank. I am a resident of District 47a. I am submitting this testimony against (SBI 20)

I am a member of Congregation Oseh Shalom in Laurel, MD. I retired from teaching economics at Howard University in May 2023.

I am strongly of the opinion that every citizen accused of a crime is entitled to a lawyer; a parent or guardian is not enough protection for a vulnerable child, and a child may not be sophisticated enough to even know that s/he needs a lawyer.

While one would hope that a parent or guardian would have the best interest of the child at heart, a lawyer would be more knowledgeable about how to protect the child and is legally OBLIGATED to have the best interests of a child at heart. If adults are entitled to lawyers, why would children not have the same entitlement?

I am also strongly opposed to allowing children to be placed in the adult system, a current practice in Maryland.. Children in the adult system are often placed in solitary confinement, which, according to Amnesty International, is torture. Children who do not have rehabilitative support designed for children (and which is unavailable in the adult system) are more likely to become adult offenders. Finally, 80% of juveniles charged as adults have their charges dropped. **I respectfully urge this committee to return an unfavorable report on SB#I 20.**