



Ella Ennis, Legislative Chairman  
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February 12, 2024

Senator Will Smith, Chairman  
And Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee  
Senate of Maryland  
Annapolis, Maryland

Re: **SB 0326** – Juvenile Law -- Questioning of a Juvenile – **FAVORABLE**

Dear Chairman Smith and Committee Members,

The Maryland Federation of Republican Women supports SB 0326 to allow a public safety exception to the Juvenile Interrogation Act of 2022. We are all aware of the increasing number of violent crimes committed by adolescent children in our communities and schools in recent years. The Maryland Department of Juvenile Services, in a September 2023 Baltimore Sun article, reported that:

*Between 2013 and 2022, young people killed in homicides increased by 62.1% (from 29 victims to 47). In Baltimore, arrests of young people for murder rose from 5 in 2017 to 12 in 2022, with 8 in the first 6 months of 2023.*

*The report's chart of Juvenile Complaints by Offense for FY 2023 showed 1,567 complaints of crimes of violence, and 1,611 for non-violent felonies. This is up from 1,329 complaints of crimes of violence and 945 non-violent felonies in 2022. We don't have an accurate picture of how many of the homicides of juveniles were committed by other juveniles.*

We all want parents to be notified and to be involved in decisions affecting their children. This bill requires the officer to make a reasonable effort to contact the parents or guardians of a child where probable cause exists that the child may have committed or been involved in a crime of violence.

If unable to reach the parents, in the effort to keep other children or adults safe, it seems prudent to allow the questioning of the child about the violent crime or the use or possession of a firearm.

The time to stop the violence or avoid further harm by others involved can be very limited. Allowing a police officer to question a child when a crime of violence is committed or a firearm is involved could save lives.

Please give **SB 0326** a **FAVORABLE** report.

Sincerely,  
Ella Ennis  
Legislative Chairman