



VISION - *BRIDGE Maryland sees the state challenged by a history of inequity but engaged in community organizing for a more just tomorrow.*

MISSION - *BRIDGE Maryland uses intentional relationship building, organizing, and intensive leadership development in order to strengthen congregations and faith leaders to demonstrate and advance justice in the world.*

HB1107 - JUVENILE LAW - CONFINEMENT AND RESTRICTIVE HOUSING - LIMITATIONS

FAVORABLE with Amendments

Dear Chair Clippinger, Vice Chair Bartlett, and members of the Judiciary Committee,

BRIDGE Maryland, Inc. is an interfaith organization with laity and religious leaders who identify and address community issues by building power to pursue equity and opportunity for all Marylanders, and we support HB1107 with amendments. **Why were Juvenile Detention Centers ever created? Opponents of this bill forgot. So here is a quick reminder. Juvenile detention centers were created to address the unique needs of young offenders separately from adults.** Here are the main reasons:

1. **Rehabilitation Over Punishment:** The primary goal is to rehabilitate rather than punish. Juveniles are seen as more capable of change, so the focus is on education, counseling, and skill development.
2. **Protection from Adult Inmates:** Young offenders are separated from adults to protect them from physical harm and negative influences present in adult prisons.
3. **Age-Appropriate Justice:** Juvenile centers are designed to account for the cognitive and emotional development of youth, recognizing that they may not fully understand the consequences of their actions.
4. **Prevent Recidivism:** By addressing underlying issues such as family problems, substance abuse, or mental health needs, juvenile centers aim to reduce the likelihood of reoffending.
5. **Education and Socialization:** Many centers provide educational programs and social skills training to help young offenders reintegrate into society successfully.
6. **Legal Reform and Child Welfare:** Historically, children were treated the same as adults in the justice system. Juvenile detention centers emerged from legal reforms emphasizing the welfare and rehabilitation of young people.

These centers reflect society's belief in second chances and that young people can learn from their mistakes and make positive changes.

Sadly, lawmakers and society have been bamboozled and hoodwinked by the chaos "bleed and Lead" media that Black and Brown children are unredeemable predators who need punitive corrections because their parents are incapable of controlling their behavior. Clearly the opponents of this bill forgot two things. One, poverty and systemic systems degrade families, and two, don't judge a parent until you've walked a mile in their shoes—**how dare you judge them**. Let's protect, nurture, and provide for troubled and sometimes victimized children until society makes that a priority for all children.

For these reasons we strongly encourage this committee to issue a favorable report with amendments to HB1107.

Sincerely,

Marlon Tilghman

Rev. Dr. Marlon Tilghman

Executive Board, BRIDGE Maryland, Inc. (Organized in Baltimore City and five surrounding counties)