

Date of Hearing: February 4, 2026

Emily C. Blank
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TESTIMONY ON SB# 323 - POSITION: (FAVORABLE)
Juvenile Court - Jurisdiction (Youth Charging Reform Act)

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

FROM: Emily C. Blank

My name is Emily C. Blank. I am a resident of District 47a. I am submitting this testimony in support of SB#323), (Bill Name).

I am a retired economics professor. I am also a member of Congregation Oseh Shalom and a core leader of the Maryland chapter of Bend the Arc, Jewish Action. I believe it is wrong to charge children as adults, because their brains are still developing. When children are charged as adults, they don't receive critical educational resources and psychological support. For their own protection, they are sometimes placed in solitary confinement, which Amnesty International claims is torture. Children charged as adults are statistically more likely to offend again when they actually become adults. Most children charged as adults are eventually shifted back to the youth system anyway, but they are harmed by the time spent in adult prisons.

Maryland charges more teens as adults than any state except for Alabama. I remember being a young person and not entirely in control of my impulses. Fortunately for me, I was a white girl, and not automatically looked upon as suspicious. My students at Howard University, however, had a much more precarious adolescence. They told me often that they were the lucky ones who had made it to college. I would like to see all children have that same opportunity should they wish it.

End with: **I respectfully urge this committee to return a (favorable/favorable with amendments/unfavorable) report on SB#323.**