



TESTIMONY - FAVORABLE

SB323 Juvenile Court - Jurisdiction (Youth Charging Reform Act)

To: The Honorable Senator William C. Smith, Chair, Senator Jeff Waldstreicher, Vice Chair, and Members of the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

FROM: The Rev. Linda K. Boyd, Maryland Episcopal Public Policy Network (MEPPN)

DATE: February 4, 2026

The Maryland Episcopal Public Policy Network offers favorable testimony in support of SB233. Our congregations serve people throughout Maryland.

The Juvenile Justice system is designed to handle the adjudication and treatment of youth. This is especially important since, as the US Supreme Court has recognized, “children are constitutionally different from adults in ... their culpability” [Montgomery v. Louisiana, 2016].

This bill significantly reduces the offenses for which preemptive adult court charges may be filed. It would: 1) reduce the categories of offenses that automatically may be charged adult court to a smaller number — only the most serious charges (murders, carjackings, rapes) charged against juveniles age 16 or older; and 2) preserve the “reverse waiver” process so some cases may be returned to the juvenile system.

For these reasons, the Maryland Episcopal Public Policy Network urges this committee to issue a favorable report on SB233.

The Maryland Episcopal Public Policy Network (MEPPN) is a ministry of The Episcopal Diocese of Maryland, The Episcopal Diocese of Washington, and The Delaware-Maryland Synod ELCA