

Wednesday, February 4, 2026

Arlene Ogurick
Baltimore, MD 21210

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: Arlene Ogurick

My name is Arlene Ogurick. I am a resident of District 41, Baltimore City. **I am submitting this testimony in support of SB#323, Juvenile Court - Jurisdiction (Youth Charging Reform Act).** This bill would end automatically charging children as adults.

I am a member of the Baltimore Jewish Cultural Chavurah. Jewish tradition consistently urges us to pursue “justice” - justice is defined as compassion and responsibility towards the oppressed/marginalized. Saving a life takes precedence over almost all of the other commandments.

I regularly volunteer with a non-profit organization that brings the arts into Baltimore city public schools. Students are involved in a variety of projects that inspire creativity, self confidence, and awareness of possibilities.

Children who are automatically charged as adults by the Maryland court system are removed from any of the juvenile courts’ involvement in the transfer process. They miss out on contact with juvenile court judges who are trained to consider factors like childhood trauma and juvenile brain development when making decisions. If these youth are placed in adult jails, they do not have access to rehabilitative programs, mental health treatment and other services available in the youth justice system.

Charging kids as adults leads to higher rates of later reincarceration, as well as increased isolation and physical and sexual violence. This the opposite of the outcome Marylanders want for their young people.

I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on SB# 323.