

This is a shortened version of the victim's impact statement that I made to the court almost exactly two years ago. I was the victim in a carjacking committed by two boys, one of which was caught and charged as an adult – he was 16 and spent his 17th birthday awaiting his transfer hearing in an adult jail, where he sat for 6 months. Because of my experience with trauma, I do not support HB0834.

The first Sunday night after my 24th birthday, I drove home from my boyfriend's house because I had work early the next morning and was happy to find a parking space right around the corner from my house. Two guys walked past my car as I got out. I closed the door and pressed the lock button on my keys.

That moment, I was in a chokehold. [NAME] and his friend had turned around, ran toward me, and [NAME] was holding me from behind. He turned me around to face the second guy who knocked everything I was holding from my hands. All I could think was, "I can't believe this is happening to me."

[NAME] dropped me onto the sidewalk. I heard my car start, saw the lights out of the corner of my eye, heard the car doors slam shut, and listened to the tires screech as [NAME] and his friend peeled away and left me in the fetal position on the ground.

Up until recently, I didn't walk anywhere alone at any time of day and walked with my fists clenched and heart rate elevated. This all happened to me when I began my master's degree in public health at Johns Hopkins – I have since graduated with many supports from school and my friends and family. He took not only my car that night, but also my sense of safety and confidence.

[NAME] was 16. [NAME] has parents, he has people in his life who care that he was charged and committed a crime. They are affected by the now absence of their son, brother, cousin, grandson. Having read the medical and psychological profile performed on [NAME], it is striking that he felt the same helplessness and fear that I do now – he is also a victim. [NAME] has experienced terrible things in his short life and suffers because of them in some of the same physical and emotional ways as me now. I do not mean to give him a pass or an excuse for his behavior, but I can understand the

bleakness he feels about life and what he perceives his future looks like. Life must look grim to **[NAME]**.

In his evaluation, **[NAME]** talks about goals and dreams. He said he hopes to attend college and is interested in becoming involved with performing arts. It is only through intensive interventions that his goals can be realized, and to the best of my knowledge, such interventions are only available in the juvenile justice system.

It was my position that this case be transferred to the juvenile court system, where he could have the opportunity to partake in rehabilitative services that will help him to live a fruitful and criminal free life. I truly want the best for **[NAME]**, who has suffered at the hands of an inner-city that never had his best interests at heart.

I had discussions with the juvenile prosecutor and we devised what I saw as a reasonable plan for **[NAME]** in the custody of the juvenile court system, including removal from society for a period of time, going back to school at a different high school in the county, and completing programs that are designed to help him develop. The criminal attorney who we were working with let me know that if this case remained and was sentenced in the adult system, this boy could only receive about four months in prison.

I share this story today to give you some insight about how a victim can react to crime and to try and help you see **[NAME]** as a victim, too, who constantly felt on edge and unsafe, both of which are normal biological responses, and who responded to those feelings by finding validation with the wrong crowd and making a split second decision at the age of 16.

Passing this legislation will put more kids like **[NAME]** in adult prison before transfer. **[NAME]** sat alone with dangerous adult criminals for 6 months with an adult charge that was visible to the public and separated from his mother, who from what I could tell was his only advocate – only to be transferred back to the juvenile jurisdiction, which cost time, money, and undue burden on the system.