

Members of the Judiciary Committee

I am writing to you to request your affirmative vote for HB 315 (Juvenile Interrogation Protection Act), with the amendment submitted by the sponsor of the bill.

When I became aware of the current situation in which juveniles can and are frequently interrogated without parental notification or legal counsel (a situation this bill is intended to remedy), I was shocked. I worked for years as a NIH epidemiologist whose duty was coordinating a multicenter, multicity research network studying HIV/AIDS in teens and young adults. I can tell you that federal regulations require parental permission for any minor's involvement in research, even something as simple as a survey. This requirement could be waived but only in the circumstance that researchers could demonstrate that the survey posed no more than a minimal risk (usually by being anonymized). This whole research endeavor entailed stringent application and review procedures.

How could there be less protections for youth placed in interrogation situations where there is a power differential and the likelihood of misunderstanding and intimidation? How could there be less protection for these youth when the outcome of such a situation could change the trajectory of their lives?

Our government should never have two standards for the protections of its citizens: one for research and one for law enforcement.

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