

January 19, 2021

Dear Members of the House Judiciary  
Committee,

This testimony is being submitted by Showing  
Up for Racial Justice Baltimore, a group of white  
folks working as part of a multi-racial movement  
for equity and racial justice in Baltimore City and  
Baltimore County. We are also working in

collaboration with the Out for Justice (OFJ). I am a resident of MD District 43. I was once a teenager,  
and I cringe when I think of some of the nutty and ill-advised things I did. I am testifying **in support of  
House Bill 409**.



This bill provides several important protections for juveniles that are convicted as adults. It prohibits a court from imposing a sentence of life without the possibility of parole, allows a juvenile to request reduced sentencing, and allows a court to impose a sentence less than the minimum term required by law.

In Maryland there are currently about 300 people, convicted as juveniles, who will die in prison. Harsh sentences on juveniles that do not offer the possibility of reform are inhumane. Established brain science shows that juvenile minds are still forming and often lack impulse control, so juveniles are actually more likely to be rehabilitated than adults. Additionally, as Maryland legislators, you should strive to make Maryland a forgiving and rehabilitating state, especially when it comes to those who have decades of life to change and grow. None of us would want to be judged for our entire lives by things we did as teenagers!

This is especially true for Black youth, who are sentenced to life without parole at 10 times the rate of white youth. Therefore, reforming juvenile conviction policies is also a way to right the wrongs of structural racism.

It is for these reasons that I am encouraging you to **vote in support of House Bill 409**.  
Thank you for your time, service, and consideration.

Sincerely,  
Jan Kleinman  
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Showing Up for Racial Justice Baltimore