

I am a resident of District 12 and a member of Showing Up for Racial Justice Baltimore. I am testifying in support of HB0409.

This bi-partisan 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, that will die in prison. Harsh sentences on juveniles that do not offer the possibility of reform are inhumane. Established brain science that shows that juvenile minds are still forming and often lack impulse control, so juveniles are actually most likely to be rehabilitated.

Black youth are sentenced to life without parole at 10 times the rate of white youth. Therefore, reforming juvenile conviction policies is also a way to address structural racism.

It is for these reasons that I am encouraging you to vote in support of HB0409.

Thank you for your time, service, and consideration.

Sincerely,
Daryl Yoder
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