



*"Being here for Maryland's Children, Youth, and Families"*

**Testimony submitted to Senate Judicial Proceeding Committee**

**March 3, 2022**

**SB 769 - Minors Convicted as Adults – Sentencing – Transfer to Juvenile Court Support**

The Maryland Association of Youth Service Bureaus (MAYS B), which represents a network of Bureaus in the State of Maryland, supports SB 769 Minors Convicted as Adults – Sentencing – Transfer to Juvenile Court with an amendment to delete the section that creates a blended sentence (see below).

Youth Service Bureaus provide prevention, intervention and treatment services to youth and their families. SB 769 will ensure courts determining the sentences for a minor convicted as an adult consider the many factors that may have contributed to the minor's actions and to the level of involvement of the minor in the actions taken. MAYS B believes this bill supports the State's efforts to acknowledge the research on adolescent brain development and that recognition that the brain is not fully developed until age 24 or 25. MAYS B supports a justice system that is developmentally informed and urges a favorable finding with amendment.

This bill will require court to consider factors such as: the age of the minor at the time of the offense, the capacity of the minor for rehabilitation, the minor's family and community environment, the minor's ability to appreciate risks and understand the consequences of actions, the intellectual capacity of the minor, the level of participation of the minor in the offense, the minor's prior exposure to adverse child experiences (ACES), and the trauma history of the minor, etc. The consideration of these factors recognizes that youth are impacted by the environments in which they live and by the trauma they have experienced.

Adolescent brain research findings show that brains are not fully developed until people reach their mid-twenties. The last portion to fully mature is the frontal and temporal lobes of the brain, where the processes of thought and memory are based. This supports the foundation of a justice system highlighting the need for minors to be treated differently from adults when they come into contact with the system and at time of sentencing. We ask for a favorable report.

Respectfully Submitted:

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1 Somerville LH, Casey BJ. Developmental Neurobiology of Cognitive Control and Motivational Systems. Sackler Institute for Developmental Psychobiology, Weill Cornell Medical College, NY, USA.