

Good afternoon and thank you for having me my name is Keisha Hogan, I am a mother of four children 2 boys 2 girls. In the year 2013 my first-born child a son, at the tender age of 13 was committed by judge Herman C Dawson to 891 days for a misdemeanor assault charge. This was my son's first involvement ever with the judicial system. He had never even been brought home by the police. Throughout the entire court proceedings, I was never allowed to speak on my son's behalf the judge simply would not allow me to speak. Judge Dawson repeatedly ignored recommendations from every entity interviewing my son to send him home. As a result of that decision my family was decimated, I lost my mind I had just had my fourth child, so I was going through postpartum depression trying to balance this new normal of having four kids topped with my first-born child being arrested for the first time never having had any other police activity of any kind and being taken away from me for 891 days. I honestly couldn't cope for the first two years I was in therapy twice a week I became a raging alcoholic I could barely care for my children I had periods where I just couldn't get out of bed, I literally mourned my child my son. My son was sent all over the state of Maryland to places many times created hardships to maintain visitation. I witnessed my son being chemically restrained, I witnessed my son not being malnourished, he lost a tremendous amount of weight being away. As a mother I can't even explain how it felt to have to go visit your son and hear him tell you that he's not being fed enough and he's always hungry and you have to drive away from this facility and leave your child there after numerous attempts of getting trying to get him home and everyone saying send him home except the judge. I know now that in that first two years I had a nervous breakdown because I didn't know what to do I didn't know how to help my baby I didn't know how to cope with the fact that my son was being mistreated by a judge. I felt completely defeated and all I could do was pray I prayed my son home it was divine intervention that brought my son home and when he came home however, because I was not able and the services were not available. I could not set up services for my son before he came home. When he came home it was like letting a caged animal out of its cage he had been gone so long and the structure and lifestyle were so different it was extremely hard for him to adjust he ultimately reoffended a year later and now sits in a prison cell in Cumberland MD. I am the voice of mothers who don't know how to fight but want to I implore you to pass this bill, so much damage has been created by the fact that my son spent 891 days of his juvenile life in Maryland juvenile detention centers for a first offense.