

TESTIMONY IN FAVOR OF SB0053

To: Chair & Members of the Committee

From: Cassandra R. Beverley, Esquire

I'm an attorney with a private general practice in Bel Air. My practice includes juvenile and criminal law. I am asking for a favorable vote on the above referenced legislation. Just within the last 2 weeks I had to assist a family whose boys were being held by the sheriff's office on suspicion of theft. The boys were picked up from their home without any prior notice to their parents. They were interrogated without their parents being present and without the benefit of counsel. The parents waited at the sheriff's office to see their children for approximately 2 hours before calling me and were not permitted to talk to their children. Fortunately, they had my number and contacted me for assistance. I was able to gain the release of the boys within a short time of my arrival at the Sheriff's office. I have no doubt that they would have been held much longer had they not had access to counsel.

I have seen young adult Defendants who are ill-equipped to handle a police interrogation. Some have limited reading skills but are embarrassed to admit they don't understand their Miranda rights. I implore you to pass this legislation to protect our children. I hope that you believe that our children deserve every protection that we can provide for them. We should not allow the same tactics that are used on adults to be used on children. Maryland should not be at the bottom of the list of states that provide little protections for our children. Thank you for reviewing this testimony.

Cassandra R. Beverley