

Bill Number: HB 294
Edward J. Coyne, Deputy State's Attorney for Carroll County
Opposed

WRITTEN TESTIMONY OF EDWARD J. COYNE,
DEPUTY STATE'S ATTORNEY FOR CARROLL COUNTY
IN OPPOSITION TO HOUSE BILL 294
ELIMINATING AUTOMATIC ADULT JURISDICTON FOR JUVENILES
CHARGED WITH CRIMES OF MURDER, RAPE AND OTHER
VIOLENT CRIMES

I write in opposition to House Bill 294, which would eliminate the automatic adult jurisdiction for Juveniles charged with murder, rape, and other crimes of violence. This bill is a dramatic departure from the current law, which starts Juveniles, who commit the worst of the worst crimes, in the adult system. Rather than attempting to incrementally modify the current law by removing one or more of the crimes including the misdemeanor crimes, this bill would require Juveniles charged with murder to be charged in Juvenile court. From 2013 to 2020, over 95% of Juveniles charged with automatic adult offenses were 16 and over. (See Juvenile Justice Reform Council Final Report). The Juvenile Court and the Department of Juvenile Service (DJS) can't promote public safety and the safety of victims as much as the adult system. Currently, DJS has a policy where they request all felony referrals be sent back to them for an intake supervision to avoid having the cases heard in Juvenile Court. Can you imagine a Juvenile who commits a murder, rape, or carjacking offense would avoid Court involvement? This bill would create inadequate measures to protect the public and victims, especially at a time where violent crimes like murder are on the uptick. The

Adult system provides a more balanced option for Juveniles, who commit murders, rape, and other crimes of violence. The Juvenile system has the rehabilitation of the Juvenile as its only consideration. The Adult system is not only able to consider the rehabilitation of the Juvenile offender but also public safety to keep the victim and the community safe.

I am respectfully requesting that this committee uphold public safety and victims and give HB 294an unfavorable report.