

Date of Hearing: 2/02/22

Your Full Name: Andrew J. Miller

Address: 16 Emerald Ridge Court, Baltimore, MD 21209

**TESTIMONY ON HB 269/SB 53**  
**POSITION: FAVORABLE**  
**Juvenile Interrogation Protection Act**

**TO:** Chair Clippinger, Vice Chair Moon, and members of the Judiciary Committee

**FROM:** Andrew J. Miller

**OPENING: My name is Andrew Miller. I am a resident of District 11. I am submitting this testimony in support of HB 269/SB 53, The Juvenile Interrogation Protection Act.**

I am a member of Chizuk Amuno Congregation in Stevenson, MD. I am a past president of the congregation and serve currently as chair of the Social Justice Advocacy Committee. For me it is a religious obligation, rooted in our sacred Jewish texts and teachings, to speak out in opposition to injustice in our community and in our state, and to support measures to remedy injustice. The Juvenile Interrogation Protection Act is a prime example of a bill that will remedy unjust practices that are currently permitted in Maryland.

All of us no doubt are familiar with the story of the Central Park Five, a group of teenagers in New York who were arrested in 1989 and interrogated for many hours without benefit of attorney. All five submitted false confessions. All five recanted their confessions, and there was no physical evidence or eyewitness evidence connecting them to the crime of which they were accused. But they were convicted and sent to prison for lengthy sentences. In 2002 the actual perpetrator of the attack on the Central Park Jogger confessed to the crime and all five men were exonerated after spending a collective 41 years in prison for a crime they did not commit. They sued the city of New York for malicious prosecution, racial discrimination and emotional distress, and finally in 2014 a Federal judge approved a \$41 million settlement. Given the lack of actual evidence in the case, it is clear that if they had had access to legal advice, their collective trauma would have been avoided. Unfortunately, false confessions obtained in the absence of legal counsel are all too common, especially when those being interrogated are juveniles.

When the current bill was first proposed in 2021 I was astonished to learn that what happened to the Central Park Five was, and is, still legal in Maryland. This is unconscionable. It is long past time to guarantee that juveniles have access to legal counsel when accused of a crime.

Otherwise we are continuing to endorse a system of unequal justice before the law. Therefore I **respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on HB269/SB53.**