

**Testimony before Judicial Proceedings Committee
Support
HB 269 – Juvenile Law - Juvenile Interrogation Protection Act
February 2, 2022**

On behalf of the National Association of Social Workers Maryland Chapter, Forensic Committee Maryland's Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers (NASW–MD), would like to express our support for HB 269 -- Juvenile Interrogation Protection Act.

This legislation would require that an attorney be present before a law enforcement officer interrogates a child and that the child's parents, guardian, or custodian be notified of the child's location.

Many complications and problems could be avoided when a child has an attorney present during an interrogation. Children are uniquely in need of an attorney during interrogation because they may not fully understand their rights or police questions because their brains are not fully developed, and the criminal justice system can be especially intimidating to children. These concerns are more significant when the child has intellectual challenges.

Additionally, attorneys can provide for the child's best interest. Many children involved with the legal system are also involved with other public, and private service agencies and gathering information from these agencies can be complicated. An attorney can ensure the child is getting the best possible services available.

National Association of Social Workers-Maryland Chapter requests a favorable report for HB 269. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Mary Beth DeMartino, Executive Director, NASW MD (mdemartino.naswmd@socialworkers.org)