

BILL#HB96 Anita Lampel FAV

Date of Hearing February 16, 2023

Anita Lampel
Bethesda, MD 20817

TESTIMONY ON HB#0096- POSITION: FAVORABLE
Juvenile Court-Jurisdiction

TO: Chair Clippinger, Vice Chair Moon, and Members of the House Judiciary Committee

FROM: Anita Lampel

OPENING: My name is Anita Lampel. I am a resident of District 16. I am submitting this testimony in support of HB#0096, Juvenile Court-Jurisdiction.

I am a retired psychologist who oversaw a large child and adolescent mental health program, provided court-appointed assessments of youth for the juvenile justice system, and served on state and county commissions involved in youth concerns in California. I am a member of Adat Shalom Reconstructionist Congregation and the Women's Democratic Club of Montgomery County. My professional experience, my background in California, and my Jewish ethics all instruct me to save lives. This bill will do that.

Juvenile Justice in Maryland is broken. By percent, more young Black men are in prison than in any other state. More young men are treated as hardened criminals, condemned to losing access to education and to the moral, physical, and sexual protection we, as a society, owe to youth. This is because we automatically refer youth to adult court for one of 33 different offenses. Once there, they are sentenced to adult prison at a much higher rate than if they started in Juvenile Court. States which DO NOT do this, but instead offer hearings first in Juvenile Court and therefore use juvenile facilities more frequently, have **less recidivism** among their youth for the same offenses. I worked with these young people. Yes, they committed offenses that require intervention by society. But they are all still changing, growing, and have adolescent brains.

This is why I am in favor of HB#0096. It will reduce recidivism, offer hope to our youth and their families, and give Maryland the dignity of not remaining at the bottom of how states handle troubled youth. **I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on HB#0096.**