

Bill Number: HB 753
Scott D. Shellenberger, State's Attorney for Baltimore County
Support

WRITTEN TESTIMONY OF SCOTT D. SHELLENBERGER,
STATE'S ATTORNEY FOR BALTIMORE COUNTY,
IN SUPPORT OF HOUSE BILL 753
JUVENILE COURT – JURISDICTION – GUN OFFENSES
(Juvenile Gun Offense Accountability Act of 2023)

I write in support of House Bill 753 that will add to the jurisdiction of the juvenile court, the crime of use or possession of a firearm.

In Maryland, currently only those 13 to 18 years of age are permitted to be charged in juvenile court. The Legislature has had an exception for when an individual commits a crime of violence that jurisdiction in juvenile court begins at age 10. House Bill 753 expands that by adding those who are 10, 11 and 12 years of age to the jurisdiction of the juvenile court those charged with firearms.

In light of the proliferation of guns in the current state of our nation this seems like a common-sense provision. One merely need to Google the news and you find a 12-year-old in Ft. Meade, Anne Arundel County, Maryland who brought a handgun to school. That kind of case requires more than just school action. Guns brought to schools should have those offenders brought to juvenile court.

Please remember this is not an adult charge. This is juvenile court where everything is confidential. It is also the best place to assure that the juvenile gets the kind of help needed to assure this does not happened again.

I urge a favorable report.