

Hearing Date: 3/2
Bill Number: HB0096

KeSean Johnson
Baltimore, MD 21212

TESTIMONY ON HB96 - POSITION: FAVORABLE

Ending Autocharge

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

My name is KeSean Johnson. I am a resident of District 43A. I am submitting this testimony in support of HB96, to end autocharge

My name is KeSean Johnson, a concerned voter, a Bolton Street Synagogue congregant and a resident of District 43A and I support the HB96 Ending auto charge. I am a survivor of the pipeline to prison and this bill stings to me because it opens the opportunity for young people to be violated by the system. This bill also seems to create an opportunity for taxpayers to be shielded from abuse of resources associated with sending a case to a higher court and then being sent back lower.

As a 16 year old boy, I was unjustly arrested and jailed for something that was not my fault and was eventually facing juvenile life plus 3 years. During my arrest, I was told that I would be charged as an adult, due to the nature of the events. Once it was understood that the prosecutorial team realized they could get more time with keeping it in juvenile court they kept it there. While it was not an auto charge, imagine if I as a 16 year old boy had to be housed or even go to court with adults. Already having to deal with the stress of having time hanging over one's head and worrying about what will happen as you enter the adult space as a juvenile, I am certain it leads to distress and anxiety. A more competent and prosperous community will not be made from overcharging juveniles, but from understanding their lives and acting accordingly.

As I stated in my open, my name is KeSean Johnson, a concerned voter, a Bolton Street Synagogue congregant and a resident of District 43A and I support the HB0096 Ending auto charge, not only because I know the harm it can cause first hand, not only as a concerned citizen/taxpayer, but as a responsible community member. In closing, I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable with report on HB0096.

