

HB0096_Ann Rubin_FAV
Anna Rubin, Columbia MD 21045
**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HOUSE BILL 0096:
Jurisdiction (Youth Equity & Safety Act)**

TO: Honorable Delegate Clippinger and Vice Chair Moon, Judiciary Committee
FROM: Dr. Anna Rubin
DATE: Tuesday, February 28, 2023

I am writing in support of this bill. I am writing as a private citizen, involved in a number of Jewish organizations in the region as well as civic organizations.

The Torah commands us to pursue justice, and our sages instruct us that the methods we use to do so must be just themselves. The practice of automatically charging youths as adults in Maryland is unjust, ineffective and disproportionately targets Black and brown youth. The YES Act is a step forward by putting an end to the racist practice of autocharge. As stated in the Racial Equity and Impact Note,

The bill would substantially reduce the number of cases heard in the circuit court involving juveniles charged as adults and thus would significantly reduce the likelihood of harsher punitive outcomes for all youth charged as adults as specified in the bill. Youth of color will be positively impacted to a much greater extent due to their large overrepresentation in that group.

While Maryland has made progress on youth justice issues in recent years, the racist practice of automatically charging kids as adults must end. Charging kids as adults leads to significantly higher recidivism.

80% of the kids tried and held in the adult court and prison system are Black. Ending this practice would reduce not only violent crime, but also the criminalization and incarceration of Black youth, who are disproportionately targeted by our justice system.