

February 9, 2024

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**TESTIMONY ON SB0744 - POSITION: (UNFAVORABLE)**  
**Juvenile Law - Reform**

**TO:** Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee

**FROM:** Jeffrey S. Rubin

My name is Jeffrey S. Rubin and I am a resident of District 15. **I am submitting this testimony against SB0744, Juvenile Law – Reform.**

Maryland has a regrettable legacy of being among the worst states in our nation when it comes to how we treat children in the criminal legal system. In 2022, steps were taken to diminish a reliance on overly punitive measures and adopt practices based on data, research, and the science of youth development. SB0744 would have us return to failed policies with flawed rationales.

Rather than making better use of social services, the provisions in this bill would lead to the incarceration of more children. The tough on crime theme has again become popular among some law enforcement officials, despite the evidence strongly indicating that community services and protective measures are more effective ways to change behavior. Contrary to the reasoning behind this legislation, policies that promote the incarceration of youth will increase recidivism and decrease public safety.

Filling detention facilities is a costly, counterproductive approach that fails to address the underlying causes of behavioral problems. More attention should be devoted to dealing with the root causes of problematic behavior, and best practices in caring for youth on an individual basis. Resorting to more punishment is not the way to bring about greater public safety.

**I respectfully urge this committee to issue an unfavorable report on SB0744.**