

SB744_ClaireLanders_FAV
3/26/24
Claire Landers
Baltimore, MD 21209

TESTIMONY ON SB744- POSITION: UNFAVORABLE
Juvenile Law-Reform-Crossfile

TO: Chair Clippinger, Vice-Chair Bartlett and Members of the Judiciary Committee

FROM: Claire Landers, Resident of D11

I am submitting this testimony in opposition to SB744. I am a resident and parent in Baltimore County, District 11. Last year I viewed a video of a very young Black boy being held alone in a detention facility in Baltimore County. It was heartrending and disturbing to watch a recording of a child's helpless anguish in that government facility to plead with you now to walk back from SB744.

I ask you to reread and take into your hearts and minds the insights of [this op-ed by Judge Andre Davis and Atty. Nancy Gertner](#). They have first-hand experience in our legal system that detains and incarcerates more Black children and young teens than just about anywhere else in the entire country: That status is just shameful and the real and urgent problem that I believe Maryland's legislators must address constructively when the issue of troubled youth grabs public attention.

We know, without a doubt, that the children this bill is directed toward have often navigated extreme life experiences alone, without any of the constructive, wrap-around responses that, I dare say, my own and your own children would receive if they got in the kind of "big trouble" that brings down the wrath of state powers. Every expert in this field very clearly warns the rest of us that treating very young people as if they are hardened criminals for the sake of "accountability" does not help them; it is an experience that often harms them directly and produces increased recidivism within that group! That is the absolute worst outcome for all of us - It in no way serves the greater public interest or increases our overall safety going forward. In fact, experts have warned that strong research data indicates the approach that SB744 takes toward youth crime undermines every long-term goal you may believe that this bill will address.

Maryland's leaders - and all of us - have to accept the difficult challenge with the moral responsibility to find humane, 21st century approaches to intervene - and help, not harm - our young people who in breaking the law demonstrate they need our help most: SB744 simply will not accomplish that. **I respectfully urge this committee to return an unfavorable report on SB744.**