

Dear Chair Clippinger and members of the House Judiciary Committee,

I am a resident of District 8. I am testifying in opposition to HB814, Juvenile Law – Reform.

This bill is not right for Maryland. Children are not adults – their reasoning, analytic skills, and impulse control are developing as they age. Some Maryland leaders and media outlets are stoking fears about children, using age-old stereotypes about dangerous and violent youth. This bill undermines several important parts of the Juvenile Justice Restoration Act and ignores over 20 years of research and data on the most effective ways to hold kids accountable and improve safety.

This legislation will make us less safe by punishing children who need support while overlooking important updates that could be made to our state's law enforcement and juvenile justice systems. This legislation will see thousands more children incarcerated every year, particularly Black and brown children, exacerbating already serious racial disparities in the juvenile justice system.

Instead of HB814, we should be investing in programming and services that are proven to change behavior.

It is for these reasons that I am encouraging you to vote **in opposition to** HB814. Thank you for your time, service, and consideration.

Sincerely,

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