

SB0744\_AnnaRubin\_UNFAV

Mar. 22, 2024

Anna Rubin

Columbia, MD 21045

TESTIMONY ON SB0744 POSITION: UNFAVORABLE

Juvenile Law - Reform

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

FROM: Dr. Anna Rubin

My name is Anna Rubin. I am a resident of District 13. I am submitting this testimony against HB0814, Juvenile Law-Reform. I am a member of Columbia Jewish Congregation and act as the co-chair of its Social Action Committee and a member of the CJC Standing for Racial Justice Committee. I am also co-chair of the Indivisible Howard County Immigration Action Team.

Unless amended to only a study and commission, I request. an unfavorable vote on SB744. Jewish tradition focuses a great deal on nurturing, educating and caring for children. We are taught that the Divine encompasses both justice and mercy, but some prosecutors and lawmakers scapegoat Black children rather than nurture them as the divine beings we know all children are.

I am opposed to SB0744 because the proposed changes do not enhance community safety. This bill undermines several important provisions 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. Expanded jurisdiction for 10, 11, and 12 year olds means more kids going into detention rather than getting treatment, education and help. International human rights standards set a minimum age of 13 for arrest of a child.

Instead of investing in programming and services that are proven to change behavior, this legislation will make us less safe by punishing children who need support and giving a pass to our state's dysfunctional law enforcement and juvenile justice systems.

I am so grateful my own adopted Latino son has been spared from any experience with detention. When he was 12, he was involved with starting a small fire in our area. But his case was diverted to his doing community service and counseling. I suspect that because I am White, that changed the attitude of the police. That this method was effective is proven by his having had no further incidents in the ensuing 20 years.

I am very concerned that the proposed changes steamroll intake, may lead to overcharging, and prevent law enforcement from referring a kid for immediate services including local care teams, youth service bureaus, prevention services and law enforcement-based diversion programs. Neither does it It doesn't allocate more funds for support for youth.

I respectfully urge this committee to return an unfavorable report on SB0744. Unless amended to only a study and commission, I request an unfavorable vote on SB744.

Sincerely,

Dr. Anna Rubin

