

HB0814_JoShifrin_UNFAV

Date of Hearing: February 8, 2024

Jo Shifrin

Bethesda, MD 20817

TESTIMONY ON HB0814 POSITION: UNFAVORABLE

Juvenile Law - Reform

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

FROM: Jo Shifrin

My name is Jo Shifrin. I am a resident of District 16. I am submitting this testimony against HB0814, Juvenile Law Reform.

I am Jewish, a retiree, and a Bethesda resident for the past 10 years. My Jewish values tell me that all of us deserve a life with dignity, respect, and safety. Jewish tradition teaches that the Divine encompasses both justice and mercy.

Maryland made great strides when it previously passed the Juvenile Justice Restoration Act. But this proposed legislation undermines several provisions of that law and ignores more than 20 years of research and data on the most effective way to hold children accountable and improve safety in our community.

Real safety comes from solutions that prevent crime from occurring in the first place. Policy makers should fully fund things that are proven to create safe communities and improve people's quality of life, like good schools, treatment for mental health and drug addiction, community-led gun violence prevention and gun violence interruption programs, affordable and stable housing, and training programs and internships.

As written, HB0814 will make our communities less safe by punishing children who need support. This will see many more children incarcerated every year, and this will fall hardest on Black and brown children, exacerbating the existing racial disparities in the juvenile justice system.

I respectfully urge this committee to return an unfavorable report on HB0814.

OTE: Rebutting opposition arguments draws attention away from our coalitions' messages and can inadvertently amplify the opposition. We suggest you keep your testimony focused on our coalition's talking points and not focus on rebutting the opposition's talking points.

The closing paragraph should reiterate your position on the bill. Explain why you think the bill will be effective/ineffective, outcomes that the bill will achieve, etc. This does not need to be long. End with: **I respectfully urge this committee to return a (favorable/favorable with amendments/unfavorable) report on HB#/SB#.**