

February 1, 2025

Deedee Jacobsohn  
Rockville, MD 20852

**TESTIMONY ON SB#422 - POSITION: FAVORABLE WITH**  
**AMENDMENTS**  
**Juvenile Court - Jurisdiction**

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

**FROM:** Deedee Jacobsohn

My name is Deedee Jacobsohn and I am a resident of D16. **I am submitting this testimony in support with amendments of SB#422: Juvenile Court-Jurisdiction to end the practice of autocharging youth as adults.**

I am a member of B'nai Israel Congregation, which had a "mitzvah corps" this year for teens to engage in advocacy work. The issue they chose was youth justice, since it directly affects their peers. They learned how Jewish law differentiates between children, teens, and adults. Then they were shocked to discover how Maryland treats its teens and the long-lasting negative repercussions for charging teens as adults instead of starting them in the juvenile justice system.

I hope that the Maryland legislature will show all our teens that they care about education and rehabilitation for youth caught up in the justice system instead of a system of charging children that causes damage and increases recidivism. While SB422 is a good start, **I hope that you will amend the bill to start all children age 17 and younger in the youth justice system for any crime.** This change would in no way preclude youth from being waived up to adult court, it merely changes where they start and how they are treated until their case has been reviewed.

It is time to recognize that children who go through the juvenile justice system—particularly Black and Brown children—have a greater chance of not returning if they are treated as children and not charged as adults from the start. It is more equitable, it is just, and overall it is better for our community. I respectfully urge this committee to **return a favorable report with amendments on SB422, Juvenile Court–Jurisdiction** and end the autocharging of any youth as adults.