

Senate Bill 422
Chairman; Will Smith
Judicial Proceedings Committee
February 4, 2025 1 p.m.
BRIDGE Maryland, Inc

Dear Chairman Will Smith and Members of the Committee,

I am Rev. Dr. Marlon Tilghman, and on behalf of BRIDGE Maryland, Inc., we support SB422 with amendments. We earnestly believe that the automatic charging of any child 18 and under as an adult is an unjust law. Any law that adultifies a child to justify their imprisonment is unjust. Any law that can traumatize a youth indefinitely and into their adulthood is unjust. Any law that can place our children in danger of rape, abuse, isolation, or mental anguish is unjust. And we demand that our lawmakers and governor do better.

Give judges back their discretion, wisdom, and duty to look at alleged crimes FIRST in the juvenile legal system based on the situation, thus giving the youth a chance to reach their potential instead of their demise. Our youth are redeemable, not to be thrown away. Our children deserve #carenotcages. Our God requires we do Justice and to love mercy. Automatically charging a youth as an adult is an unjust law and NOW is the time to *let Justice rolled down like a mighty stream*.

Again, we support SB422 with amendments that ensure that no child under 18 years old is placed in the adult legal system without first being reviewed by a judge in the juvenile legal system.

Sincerely,

Rev. Dr. Marlon Tilghman

Leader, BRIDGE Maryland, Inc. (A non-profit Interfaith Community Organizing in Baltimore City and five surrounding counties of Maryland)