

January 30, 2025

As an Elder in the United Methodist Church for the last twenty years and past co-chair of the Restorative Justice Team of the Baltimore-Washington Conference, I support SB422 with amendments. Over the years I have worked with troubled youth, and I have personally seen the effects of not having this bill in place.

Proverbs 31:8-9 states:

*Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves; ensure justice for those being crushed. Yes, speak up for the poor and helpless, and see that they get justice.*

The prophet Micah tells us: to see that justice is done, love kindness and walk humbly with our God. We have a responsibility to look out for those who cannot look out for themselves. Justice is important and calls us to act on behalf of others.

Maryland sends more youth to adult courts based on offense types, per capita than any other state except Alabama. This is unacceptable!

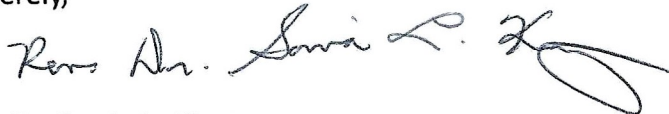
When we send our children to adult prisons, we are subjecting them to:

- Additional trauma
- Longer sentences
- Increased abuse: including assault and rape, which can lead to increase suicide.
- Increased recidivism rates

No child deserves to be abused no matter what they have done. Everyone deserves a second chance. Give our children the opportunity to grow up, heal, change and give back to their communities. It is our hope and prayer that we train a child in the way in which they shall go and when they get old, they will not depart.

As God told Jeremiah: *For I know the plans I have for you. They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and hope.* Please allow this for our children.

Sincerely,



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