



*"Being here for Maryland's Children, Youth, and Families"*

**Testimony submitted to Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee**

**February 4, 2025**

**SB389 - Minors Convicted as Adults – Sentencing – Transfer to Juvenile Court  
Support**

The Maryland Association of Youth Service Bureaus (MAYSB), which represents a network of bureaus in the State of Maryland, supports Senate Bill 389 - Minors Convicted as Adults – Sentencing – Transfer to Juvenile Court. Youth Service Bureaus provide prevention, intervention and treatment services to youth and their families. SB 389 recognizes the extraordinary circumstances involved when a child is a victim of sexual abuse and/or human trafficking. This bill will ensure courts transfer such victims to the juvenile court and thus consider the many factors that may have contributed to the minor's actions against the abuser. MAYSB believes this bill supports the State's efforts to recognize the impact of victimization on children and adolescents. MAYSB supports a justice system that is sensitive to victimization of children and adolescents and urges a favorable finding.

This bill will allow these young people to be offered the rehabilitative services that are part of the Juvenile System. As victims of sexual abuse and/or human trafficking these young people need trauma informed care including appropriate mental health services. The transfer to juvenile court allows the opportunity for such services to be provided. The consideration of these factors recognizes that youth are impacted by the abuse and victimization experienced.

Adolescent brain research findings show that brains are not fully developed until people reach their mid-twenties<sup>1</sup>. The last portion to fully mature is the frontal and temporal lobes of the brain, where the processes of thought and memory are based. This supports the foundation of the justice system highlighting the need for minors to be treated differently from adults when they come into contact with the system and at time of sentencing. We ask for a favorable report on this bill.

Respectfully Submitted:

Liz Park, PhD  
MAYSB Chair  
[lpark@greenbeltmd.gov](mailto:lpark@greenbeltmd.gov)

---

<sup>1</sup> Somerville LH, Casey BJ. Developmental Neurobiology of Cognitive Control and Motivational Systems. Sackler Institute for Developmental Psychobiology, Weill Cornell Medical College, NY, USA.