



## **Senate Bill 389: Minors Convicted as Adults – Sentencing – Transfer to Juvenile Court**

**February 4, 2025**

### **Position: Favorable**

The Choice Program at UMBC is in support of Senator Folden's bill SB 689, which authorizes a court to transfer a youth convicted as an adult to the juvenile court for sentencing. Specifically, SB 601, recognizing the significant impact of sexual abuse and/or human trafficking on a youth's development and well being, creates a pathway for a youth convicted as an adult to receive the rehabilitation and treatment services provided by the youth legal system.

The Choice Program recognizes the overwhelming evidence and research that indicates youth and communities are better served when children are removed from the adult legal system. We have served more than 27,000 Maryland youth who are systems-involved for more than 35 years. Presently, Choice works with young people and their families in Baltimore City as well as Baltimore, Howard, Prince George's, and Montgomery Counties; we recently expanded to Harford and Anne Arundel Counties. Choice serves as an alternative to the school-to-prison pipeline. Our primary goal is to reduce the number of Black and Latine young people who are ensnared in the youth legal system. Our model seeks to dismantle racist structures and, instead, employs strengths-based approaches focused on positive relationships and youth agency. We hold high expectations for youth and parents as well as high levels of support. Our youth remind us that they should not be defined by their worst mistake. These guiding principles are essential in addressing racial inequities at an individual and systemic level.

We call upon our elected officials to recognize that the youth who are convicted adults are young people—humans—who deserve supportive services. We maintain community repair and wellbeing depends on a vision of public safety that rejects the impulse to punish in the adult system. This session offers the chance to recognize the importance of rehabilitation: the primary goal of the youth legal system.

**For these reasons, The Choice Program urges a favorable report on SB369.**

For more information contact:

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