

Dear Chairman Luke Clippinger and Members of the Committee,

My name is Bishop Antonio Palmer, and I represent the United Black Clergy of Anne Arundel County. I write to express my strong support for HB-1433 and to urge its passage. The practice of trying, convicting, and sentencing children as adults is deeply flawed and has inflicted lasting harm on countless families, particularly within African American communities. Maryland must take a stand to correct this injustice.

The rigid approach of “adult crime, adult time” has led to devastating consequences, including the loss of judicial discretion. This policy fails to consider the unique circumstances and developmental differences of young people. Many states have recognized the harm caused by this practice and have chosen to reverse course, demonstrating a commitment to both justice and compassion. Maryland must do the same.

While accountability is essential, we must also acknowledge that many young offenders lack positive influences and adequate resources. A more just approach would allow judges the discretion to determine, on a case-by-case basis, whether a youth should be tried in juvenile or adult court. This is not about excusing wrongdoing but about ensuring fair and appropriate treatment that prioritizes rehabilitation over retribution.

I urge you to support HB-1433 and bring an end to the harmful practice of charging children as adults in Maryland.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

**Bishop Antonio Palmer**

United Black Clergy of Anne Arundel County