



LEGISLATIVE BLACK CAUCUS OF MARYLAND, INC.

The Maryland House of Delegates, 6 Bladen Street, Room 300, Annapolis, Maryland 21401
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Chair Luke Clippinger

Judiciary Committee

100 Taylor House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Dear Chair Clippinger, Vice-Chair Bartlett, and Members of the Committee,

The Legislative Black Caucus of Maryland offers strong favorable support for House Bill 1433 (HB1433) – Juvenile Court – Jurisdiction. This bill introduces essential reforms to Maryland's juvenile justice system, ensuring that more youth cases remain under the jurisdiction of the juvenile court rather than being automatically transferred to adult court. **House Bill 1433 is a 2025 legislative priority for the Black Caucus.**

Black youth in Maryland are disproportionately charged and sentenced as adults, exacerbating systemic inequalities within the criminal justice system. According to data from the National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers, [Black youth made up 67.7% of youth to adult transfer files in 2016, even though they are only 14% of the youth population.](#) These disparities contribute to higher rates of incarceration and recidivism, disrupting families and communities across the state.

House Bill 1433 ensures that juveniles have access to rehabilitative services and educational opportunities within the juvenile court system, rather than being subjected to the punitive measures of the adult criminal system. Research has consistently shown that youth processed in the juvenile system have significantly lower recidivism rates than those tried as adults. By prioritizing rehabilitation over incarceration, this bill aligns with evidence-based practices that promote long-term public safety and successful reintegration.

Additionally, keeping more cases within the juvenile system reduces the likelihood of young individuals being exposed to the dangers of adult prisons, where they are at a heightened risk of violence, abuse, and mental health deterioration. The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention found that [youth held in adult facilities are 34% more likely to be rearrested compared to those in the juvenile system.](#) This bill provides a fairer approach by ensuring that minors receive age-appropriate interventions rather than being subjected to lifelong criminal records.

To promote transparency and accountability, House Bill 1433 ensures that juvenile cases are handled with a focus on restorative justice principles. This approach not only benefits the affected youth but also strengthens communities

by reducing recidivism and allowing young individuals to become productive members of society.

By addressing the disproportionate impact of the adult criminal justice system on Black youth, House Bill 1433 advances principles of justice and equity while allowing Maryland to redirect resources toward rehabilitation and community support. The bill's provisions reflect the Caucus' commitment to addressing systemic disparities and advocating for reforms that uphold human rights within the criminal justice system.

House Bill 1433 represents a thoughtful and equitable approach to juvenile justice reform. It balances public safety with fiscal responsibility and humane treatment, ensuring that policies reflect our values of equity and fairness. For these reasons, the Legislative Black Caucus of Maryland strongly supports House Bill 1433 and urges a favorable vote.

Legislative Black Caucus of Maryland