

Date of Hearing: March 26, 2025

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TESTIMONY ON HB 1433- POSITION: FAVORABLE With AMENDMENTS
JUVENILE COURT – JURISDICTION

TO: Chair Clippinger, Vice Chair Bartlett, and members of the Judiciary Committee

FROM: Jo Shifrin

OPENING: My name is Jo Shifrin. I am a resident of District 16. I am submitting this testimony in strong support of HB 1433, Juvenile Court – Jurisdiction, with amendments..

I moved to Bethesda 10 years ago to be near my grandchildren. My support for this legislation comes from my grounding in Jewish values. Among these values are *Tikkun Olam*, an obligation to make the world a more fair and equitable place for people to live.

Under current Maryland law, people under 18 years old charged with any of 33 separate offenses are arrested and automatically charged as if they were adults, in criminal court.

HB 1433 would limit the practice of automatic charging 73% of the cases currently charged in adult criminal court would start in juvenile court. This bill would limit the list of charges in which 16- and 17-year olds are automatically charged as if they were adults and start all cases involving 14- and 15-year olds in juvenile court.

HB 1433 does not prohibit a discretionary waiver under which a child can be waived back to adult court, if a juvenile judge approves a motion by the prosecutor.

HB 1433 is good for public safety because it will keep more kids out of adult criminal court. Teens charged in adult court are more likely to reoffend when they get out of prison than kids retained in juvenile court, according to a 2007 CDC report. This may be because they are more likely to be physically and sexually assaulted in an adult prison and there are little to no educational or rehabilitative opportunities in adult prison. This differs from the juvenile system in which teens receive schooling and therapy. *The purpose of adult prison is to punish; the purpose of the juvenile system is to teach accountability and to develop character to assist the teen in becoming a responsible and productive member of society.*

I respectfully urge the Committee to return a report that is favorable with amendments on HB 1433.