

February 24, 2025

House Bill 1433
Chairman; Luke Clippinger
House Judiciary
February 26, 2025 1 p.m.



Two Gems Consulting Services,
Bahá'í Faith leadership council member writing individually and independently

Dear Chairman Luke Clippinger and Members of the Committee,

I am Dr. Geri Lynn Peak, an independent public health and research consultant; former administrator of Baltimore Youth Initiative H.S. (2012-2016); and a member of the democratically and anonymously elected local governing body of the Bahá'í Faith community in Baltimore City.

I am writing to express my strong support for HB-1433. To urge lawmakers to reject the exploitative policy of trying, convicting, and sentencing children as adults. This practice is fundamentally flawed and has had devastating effects on many families, particularly within African American communities. It is time for Maryland to correct this injustice.

God's divine policy is to show mercy to all. The punitive mindset that promotes the notion of "adult crime, adult time" has led to serious consequences, most notably the loss of judicial discretion. This law has become a blunt instrument that disregards the unique circumstances of youth. Many states have recognized the harms of this practice and successfully rescinded it out of compassion for the individuals and families affected. It is time for Maryland to follow suit.

While we acknowledge the necessity of accountability for young people, we must also recognize that many lack positive influences and resources. Compassion should guide us in allowing judges the discretion to determine the appropriate venue for young offenders, whether juvenile or adult court, on a case-by-case basis. I urge you to support HB-1433 to end the harmful practice of charging children as adults in Maryland.

Thank you for your consideration and Harambee! (we all pull together)

Geri Lynn Peak, DrPH, MPH
Chief Insight Facilitator and Spiritual Demographer
Owner and Chief Insight Facilitator, Two Gems Consulting Services