

**House Bill 1433**

**Chairman; Luke Clippinger**

**House Judiciary**

**February 26, 2025 1 p.m.**

**(Eta Theta Sigma Alumnae Chapter, Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority, Inc.)**

**Dear Chairman Luke Clippinger and Members of the Committee,**

I am Dr. Detrice Wallace, and I represent the Eta Theta Sigma Chapter of Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority, Inc.. I am writing to express my strong support for HB-1433. The policy of trying, convicting, and sentencing children as adults 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.

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 Many states have recognized the harms of this practice and successfully rescinded it out of compassion for the individuals and families affected.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.

Sigma Gamma Rho is an historic Divine 9 sorority that centers the rights of women and their families in our work. Centering women's and their families' rights for justice is essential to building a more equitable, peaceful, and prosperous society. In order for communities to thrive, we believe that women and their families must enjoy the fullest range of rights and justice. Incarcerating youth undermines public safety, damages young people's physical and mental health, impedes their educational and career success, and often exposes them to abuse. While we acknowledge the necessity of accountability for young people, we must also recognize that many lack positive 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.