



VISION - *BRIDGE Maryland sees the state challenged by a history of inequity but engaged in community organizing for a more just tomorrow.*

MISSION - *BRIDGE Maryland uses intentional relationship building, organizing, and intensive leadership development in order to strengthen congregations and faith leaders to demonstrate and advance justice in the world.*

HB1433 - JUVENILE COURT – JURISDICTION

FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS

Dear Chair Clippinger, Vice Chair Bartlett, and members of the Judiciary Committee,

BRIDGE Maryland, Inc. is an interfaith organization with laity and religious leaders who identify and address community issues by building power to pursue equity and opportunity for all Marylanders. And we **support HB1433 as written, and ask for a favorable report.** We earnestly believe that the automatic charging of any child 18 and under as an adult is an unjust law. Any law that adultifies a child to justify their imprisonment is unjust. Any law that can traumatize a youth indefinitely and into their adulthood is unjust. Any law that can place our children in danger of rape, abuse, isolation, or mental anguish is unjust. Thus, we see this bill as a step forward to undoing this unjust legislation by addressing 73% of the children in the legal system who have been detained.

Continue to give judges back their discretion, wisdom, and duty to look at alleged crimes FIRST in the juvenile legal system based on the situation, thus giving the youth a chance to reach their potential instead of their demise. All youth are redeemable, not to be thrown away. All children deserve #carenotcages. Our God requires we do Justice and to love mercy. Automatically charging any youth as an adult is an unjust law and this is a good step toward that end.

Again, we support HB1433 **for these reasons and we strongly encourage this committee to issue a favorable report on HB1433.**

Sincerely,

Marlon Tilghman

Rev. Dr. Marlon Tilghman
Executive Board, BRIDGE Maryland, Inc. (Organized in Baltimore City and five surrounding counties)