



Council on American-Islamic Relations

CAIR Office in Maryland

6120 Baltimore National Pike, Suite 2D

Baltimore, MD 21228

E-mail: mdoutreach@cair.com URL www.cair.com

Tele 410-971-6062 Fax 202-488-0833

January 30, 2025

Honorable Chair Luke Clippinger
House Judiciary Committee
100 Taylor House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: Testimony Favorable for HB165 Custodial Interrogation of Minors - Admissibility of Statements

Dear Chair Clippinger and Members of the Judiciary Committee:

On behalf of the Maryland office of the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR), I thank you for this opportunity to testify in strong support of House Bill 165 Custodial Interrogation of Minors. CAIR is America's largest Muslim civil rights and advocacy organization.

House Bill 165 establishes a **rebuttable presumption** that statements made by minors during custodial interrogations are **involuntary and inadmissible** in court when law enforcement intentionally uses false information to elicit those statements.

Protecting Vulnerable Youth from Coerced Confessions

HB 165 is a critical step toward ensuring fair treatment and due process for Maryland's children, particularly Black and Brown youth who are disproportionately targeted by law enforcement. The use of deceptive interrogation tactics on minors has been well-documented to result in false confessions, leading to wrongful convictions and lifelong harm.

- Studies show that **minors are significantly more susceptible** to coercion than adults due to their **underdeveloped cognitive abilities and heightened suggestibility**.
- According to the **Innocence Project**, nearly **one-third of wrongful convictions** overturned by DNA evidence involved false confessions, with **minors making up a disproportionate share** of these cases.
- Deceptive tactics—such as **lying about evidence, falsely promising leniency, or misrepresenting legal rights**—exploit a minor's trust and lack of experience with the criminal justice system.

HB 165 is particularly relevant to Maryland's diverse communities, including immigrant, refugee and marginalized youth, who are more likely to experience racial profiling, school-to-prison pipeline policies, and police misconduct. Ensuring that a minor's statement is only admissible if obtained voluntarily—without deception—protects constitutional rights and strengthens community trust in the justice system.

CAIR urges Maryland to join states like Illinois and Oregon, which have passed similar protections against coercive police tactics targeting minors. HB 165 does not prohibit police from conducting interrogations but ensures that any statement obtained through deception is subject to higher scrutiny before being used in court.

We respectfully urge you vote favorably on **HB 165** to safeguard children's rights, prevent wrongful convictions, and hold law enforcement accountable for unethical interrogation practices. Maryland's youth deserve a justice system that is **fair, transparent, and grounded in integrity**. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Washington D.C.

Alabama Arizona California Colorado Connecticut Florida Georgia Illinois Kansas Kentucky Maryland
Massachusetts Michigan Minnesota Missouri New Jersey New York North Carolina Ohio Oklahoma Pennsylvania
Texas Washington

Respectfully,

Zainab Chaudry, Pharm.D.
Director, CAIR Maryland
Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR)
zchaudry@cair.com

Washington D.C.

Alabama Arizona California Colorado Connecticut Florida Georgia Illinois Kansas Kentucky Maryland
Massachusetts Michigan Minnesota Missouri New Jersey New York North Carolina Ohio Oklahoma Pennsylvania
Texas Washington