



TESTIMONY TO THE HOUSE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE

**HB0475 - Department of Juvenile Services - Employees - Prohibited Convictions
(Juvenile Offender Protection Act)**

POSITION: UNFAVORABLE

By: Linda T. Kohn, President

Date: February 12, 2026

The League of Women Voters of Maryland opposes HB 0475. The League of Women Voters supports a criminal justice system that is just, effective, equitable, and transparent, with a focus on rehabilitation and reliance on evidence-based research in decision-making about law enforcement programs and policies.

HB 0475 would prohibit the Department of Juvenile Services from hiring anyone who had ever been convicted of a serious crime including such heinous offenses as kidnapping, voluntary manslaughter, murder, rape and sex trafficking, unless that conviction had been subsequently reversed or vacated. This interdiction would pertain to individuals who had been convicted as juveniles as well as those who had been convicted as adults. Yet [studies](#) have shown that individuals who commit serious crimes as juveniles are capable of growth and rehabilitation with subsequent successful re-entry into society. Moreover, their experiences in the criminal justice system could well prepare them to become [credible messengers](#) in the eyes of court-involved youth with whom they share similar backgrounds, enabling them to help these youth develop more positive attitudes and values.

Because HB 0475 does not recognize that formerly incarcerated persons can become actively engaged in successfully mentoring and counseling juveniles offenders, **the League of Women Voters of Maryland**, representing nearly 2,000 citizens throughout Maryland, **strongly urges you to issue a UNFAVORABLE report.**