

Thursday, February 12, 2026

Arlene Ogurick  
Baltimore, MD 21210

**TESTIMONY ON HB#409 - POSITION: FAVORABLE**  
**Juvenile Court - Jurisdiction (Youth Charging Reform Act)**

**TO:** Chair Bartlett, Vice Chair Davis, and members of the Judiciary Committee

**FROM:** Arlene Ogurick

**My name is Arlene Ogurick. I am a resident of District 41, Baltimore City. I am submitting this testimony in support of HB#409, Juvenile Court - (Youth Charging Reform Act).**

I am a member of the Baltimore Jewish Cultural Chavurah. Jewish tradition consistently urges us to pursue “justice” - justice is defined as compassion and responsibility toward the oppressed/marginalized. Saving a life takes precedence over almost all of the other commandments.

I regularly volunteer with a non-profit organization that brings the arts into Baltimore city public schools. Students are involved in a variety of projects that inspire creativity, build self confidence and open their eyes to new ways of seeing things. The organization also has a program for 10th and 11th grade public and independent school students of diverse backgrounds to develop leadership skills and engage in cross-cultural dialogue - all useful skills for young people to learn.

Children who are automatically charged as adults by the Maryland court system are removed from any of the juvenile courts’ involvement in the transfer process. They miss out on contact with juvenile court judges who are trained to consider factors like childhood trauma and juvenile brain development when making decisions. If these youth are placed in adult jails, they do not have access to rehabilitative programs, mental health treatment and other services available in the youth justice system.

Charging kids as adults leads to higher rates of later incarceration, as well as increased isolation and physical and sexual violence. This is the opposite of the outcome Marylanders want for our young people.

**I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on HB#409..**