



**TESTIMONY FOR
HB0626 Custodial Interrogation of Minors Admissibility of Statements**

Bill Sponsor: Delegate Acevero

Committee: Judiciary

Organization Submitting: Maryland Legislative Coalition

Person Submitting: Aileen Alex, co-chair

Position: FAVORABLE

I am submitting this testimony in favor of HB0626 on behalf of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. The Maryland Legislative Coalition is an association of activists - individuals and grassroots groups in every district in the state. We are unpaid citizen lobbyists, and our Coalition supports well over 30,000 members.

HB0626 is an essential additional Miranda-style protection for children. It unequivocally prevents a child's responses to false information—lies—used by police during interrogation from being admitted in court. The bill's primary purpose is to protect minors from coercive interrogation tactics that exploit their vulnerability and their instinct to trust authority figures.

Under HB0626, any statement made by a child after police knowingly use false information is presumed involuntary and inadmissible representing a further restriction from a previous bill. This rebuttable presumption means the State may only use the statement if it can clearly prove that the child spoke voluntarily and not in response to the deceptive information introduced by law enforcement.

This law is a cornerstone in protecting Maryland children, plain and simple. Children have an innate trust in authorities, and a presumption of truth is easily given. Without this law, interrogators could exploit this tendency by using lies to achieve a predetermined outcome.

HB0626 places children on a more equal footing with adults during interrogation. We must ensure that children have the same rights and privileges as adults and safeguard them from intimidation that could compromise their futures.

The Maryland Legislative Coalition supports this bill and we recommend a FAVORABLE report in Committee.