



**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 626:  
Custodial Interrogation of Minors—Admissibility of  
Statements (Exonerated 5 Act)  
\*FAVORABLE\*\***

TO: Delegate J. Sandy Bartlett, Chair, Delegate Debra Davis, Vice Chair and the members of the House Judiciary Committee

FROM: Rev. Linda K. Boyd, Member, Maryland Episcopal Public Policy Network, Diocese of Maryland

DATE: February 19, 2026

The Maryland Episcopal Public Policy Network offers favorable testimony in support of HB626. Our congregations serve people throughout Maryland.

Decades ago, Maryland joined a “tough-on-crime” movement that treats many minors as adults and increases their penalties. These policies have led to large youth prison populations that disproportionately impact poor children and children of color. Police who interrogate youth currently are permitted to lie to them, seeking to induce confessions. Children are impressionable and are not aware of their rights. They thus may make statements just to please the authority figure. This immoral practice leads to false convictions of juveniles at a rate three times higher than adults, according to one study. Such unreliable statements and confessions should be inadmissible in court.

This bill would establish a rebuttable presumption that a statement made by a minor during a custodial interrogation is involuntary and is inadmissible in a juvenile or criminal proceeding against the minor under certain circumstances. We as people of faith, believe that all children are God’s children, deserving of equal dignity and respect, and our love. They need to have the protection that this Bill provides.

We respectfully request a favorable report.