



# Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland

## Testimony in Support of HB 921- Juvenile Law - Confinement and Restrictive Housing - Limitations

To: Del. J. Sandy Bartlett, Chair, Del. Debra Davis, Vice-Chair, and  
Members of the Judiciary Committee  
From: Karen “Candy” Clark, Lead Advocate Criminal Justice Reform  
Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry-Maryland  
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The Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland asks for a favorable vote on **HB 921 - Juvenile Law - Confinement and Restrictive Housing - Limitations**. This bill aligns with our values of justice and equity, which call us to honor the inherent worth and dignity of all people, which includes those behind prison walls.

**HB 921** specifies how and why a minor may be placed in restrictive housing. This can be a traumatic period for the minor and steps must be taken to assure their safety and health, while making the adjustments needed for an effective placement. The process demonstrates a well thought out plan that aligns with our values of equity and justice, which “honors the worth and dignity ‘of the minor.

Depending on the circumstances a minor may be required to be placed in restrictive housing or may personally volunteer to enter.

The following list describes how many of the situations are to be handled:

1. When placed in restrictive housing, the minor is to be situated in the least restrictive conditions possible and given an explanation about the reason for the change. A health care provider must conduct a screening of the minor’s mental health within an hour of the placement and offer any mental health services needed. The minor is to be held for the shortest amount of time necessary and not more than 6 hours.
2. The facility staff are charged to develop a plan that will allow the minor to leave the restrictive housing and return to the general population. Once released to the open population, the minor continues to have the same privileges and conditions available to him /her that were also offered while they were in restriction, eg: phone calls, mail, visitors , showers, educational services, etc.

3. A minor may not be placed in restrictive housing solely for discipline, punishment, staff convenience, staff shortage, or retaliation. However, a minor may temporarily be placed in restrictive housing if there is an immediate risk of physical harm to someone; or to the facility.

**HB 921** provides a comprehensive guide for managing the placement of a minor in restrictive housing. This thoughtful expanse of work balances the juvenile's safety with their mental health and well-being, which honors their inherent worth and dignity.

We ask for a favorable report on **HB 921**.

*Karen "Candy" Clark*  
*Criminal Justice Reform Lead Advocate*