



**TESTIMONY TO THE HOUSE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE**

**HB0449 – JUVENILE JUSTICE RESTORATION ACT**

**POSITION: UNFAVORABLE**

**By: Linda T. Kohn, President**

**Date: February 12, 2026**

The League of Women Voters of Maryland opposes HB 0449. The League supports access to legal counsel at every decisional stage of the judicial process, irrespective of a person's ability to pay.

HB 0449 would allow law enforcement officers to interrogate juveniles without the presence of legal counsel if a parent or guardian gives consent. However, multiple studies summarized in [Juvenile Miranda Waivers And Wrongful Convictions](#) have shown that this tactic may well lead to a false confession which may in turn lead to incarceration. Research reviewed in [Why Youth Incarceration Fails: An Updated Review of the Evidence](#) also makes clear that incarceration most often increases the probability of recidivism and decreases the likelihood of future success in education and employment. Further, incarceration frequently exposes juveniles to abuse and contradicts what is widely understood to be required for successful adolescent development.

For these reasons, **the League of Women Voters of Maryland**, representing nearly 2,000 citizens throughout Maryland, **strongly urges you to issue a UNFAVORABLE report.**