



Council on American-Islamic Relations

CAIR Office in Maryland

6120 Baltimore National Pike, Suite 2D

Baltimore, MD 21228

E-mail: mdoutreach@cair.com URL www.cair.com

Tele 410-971-6062 Fax 202-488-0833

February 5, 2026

Chair Sandy Bartlett
House Judiciary Committee
100 Taylor House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: Testimony Supporting HB 389 Juveniles - Detention and Confinement - Limitations on Juvenile Contact With Incarcerated Adults

Dear Chair Bartlett and Members of the House Judiciary Committee:

On behalf of the Maryland office of the Council on American-Islamic Relations Maryland (CAIR), we respectfully urge a favorable report on House Bill 389. CAIR is the nation's largest Muslim civil rights and advocacy organization. Our mission includes protecting civil rights, promoting justice and advancing policies that ensure Maryland's justice system treats children in a developmentally appropriate manner, protects them from harm, and supports rehabilitation and successful reintegration.

HB 389 advances a clear, common-sense principle: children should not be placed in situations where they are within sight or sound of incarcerated adults.

This legislation protects our youth from harm and trauma. Children who are detained - whether in the juvenile system or under adult criminal court jurisdiction - are uniquely vulnerable to intimidation, coercion, exploitation, and physical harm when housed in proximity to incarcerated adults. Even brief exposure can be traumatic and can worsen mental health outcomes. HB 389 protects youth by prohibiting detention or confinement in any institution where the child has contact with, or is within sight or sound of, incarcerated adults.

This is not about excusing misconduct. It is about recognizing that safety and basic human dignity must remain non-negotiable, particularly when the State deprives a child of liberty.

HB 389 sets a strong baseline rule: children generally may not be held in adult correctional facilities. At the same time, the bill acknowledges real-world constraints by allowing a limited exception for processing when a secure juvenile area is unavailable - only if the youth is separated by sight and sound from adults and held no more than six hours, including transportation time to the nearest juvenile facility.

That balance protects youth while providing a workable standard for law enforcement and detention facilities.

Maryland's long-term public safety is strengthened when youth are handled in settings designed for youth - settings with age-appropriate supervision, services, and safeguards. Housing children near adults increases the likelihood of trauma, negative outcomes, and future system involvement. By keeping youth separated, HB 389 supports safer facilities, better youth outcomes, and ultimately safer communities.

HB 389 also ensures that children are not transported together with adults charged with or convicted of crimes. This closes a dangerous gap and ensures the protections of separation extend beyond the facility itself.

[Washington D.C.](#)

[Alabama](#) [Arizona](#) [California](#) [Colorado](#) [Connecticut](#) [Florida](#) [Georgia](#) [Illinois](#) [Kansas](#) [Kentucky](#) [Maryland](#)
[Massachusetts](#) [Michigan](#) [Minnesota](#) [Missouri](#) [New Jersey](#) [New York](#) [North Carolina](#) [Ohio](#) [Oklahoma](#) [Pennsylvania](#)
[Texas](#) [Washington](#)

House Bill 389 is a measured, humane, and safety-focused reform that protects children from contact with incarcerated adults, sets clear statewide standards, and preserves a narrow processing exception to address operational realities.

CAIR respectfully urges a favorable report. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Zainab Chaudry, Pharm.D.
Director, CAIR Maryland
Council on American-Islamic Relations
zchaudry@cair.com

Washington D.C.

Alabama Arizona California Colorado Connecticut Florida Georgia Illinois Kansas Kentucky Maryland
Massachusetts Michigan Minnesota Missouri New Jersey New York North Carolina Ohio Oklahoma Pennsylvania
Texas Washington