

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 853 JUVENILE LAW- JUVENILE JUSTICE REFORM

Submitted by Baltimore City Youth, Community Law in Action (CLIA)

Community Law in Action (CLIA) strongly supports SB 853. This bill passing will ensure that youth who are in the justice system will have the opportunity to enjoy adulthood without the fear of enduring repercussions from their childhood. HB 1187 in effect will work to promote the wellness of mental health in regards to black and brown children in relation to the justice system by giving second chances, allowing youth to grow and recognize their mistakes as opposed to guiding them down the school to prison pipeline.

CLIA is a youth centered not-for-profit organization that values young people. We believe that youth are valued leaders of community transformation, informed stakeholders at the forefront of decision makers, and inspiring voices for social justice.

We The Students of Community Law in Action (CLIA) are in support of the Omnibus Bill (SB 853) because:

Minimum Age

“Being able to arrest someone at the minimum age of six years old can be a very traumatic experience for a child that young. At that age, they barely have an actual understanding of the things that are going on in the world.”

“Putting a kid who made a really simple mistake and holding them to the same accord of a criminal is already steering them up and putting them on the wrong pathway.”

“Kids make mistakes and most kids in the juvenile system have been a product of their environment although it’s not an excuse it’s a reality.. Kids are kids so when they're treated like criminals at such a young age they will grow up and really believe themselves to be that.”

“There’s already so much trauma within the juvenile justice system between black and brown people and that trauma lives on and reincarnates itself throughout generations.”

Probation

“Youth who are on probation and have criminal records are often haunted from their past when they reach adulthood in regards to jobs and other responsibilities that come with being an adult.”

“It's scary sometimes, thinking that one day my little brother and/or little cousins could end up in a juvenile system for a very small mistake and that mistake following them for the rest of their lives not being allowed to grow because of a mistake they made when they were barely teenagers. When you're that young you don't know so much, you're unable to fully comprehend right from wrong.”

For these reasons CLIA supports HB 1187 and respectfully urges the committee to give this bill a favorable report.