

Dear Members of the Senate Judicial
Proceedings Committee,

This testimony is being submitted by Showing
Up for Racial Justice Baltimore, a group of
individuals working to move white folks as part
of a multi-racial movement for equity and racial
justice in Baltimore City and Baltimore County.
We are also working in collaboration with the
Out for Justice (OFJ). I am a resident of MD

District 43. As a parent, I have lived through my children's teenage years, and know they make
mistakes. I made mistakes as a teenager myself. However, we all learned from them and are better
adults because of those lessons. I am testifying **in support of Senate Bill 494.**

This bill provides several important protections for juveniles that are convicted as adults. It prohibits a
court from imposing a sentence of life without the possibility of parole, allows a juvenile to request
reduced sentencing, and allows a court to impose a sentence less than the minimum term required by
law.

In Maryland there are dozens of people convicted of crimes committed as children, who are forced to
live their full adult lives in prison without parole. Harsh sentences on children that do not offer the
possibility of reform are inhumane. Established brain science shows that juvenile minds are still forming
and often lack impulse control. This means juveniles have abundant capacity to be rehabilitated.
Additionally, as Maryland legislators, you should strive to make Maryland a forgiving and rehabilitating
state, especially when it comes to those who have decades of life to change and grow, and contribute
their talents to better our whole society.

This is especially true for Black youth, who are sentenced to life without parole at 10 times the rate of
white youth. Therefore, reforming juvenile conviction policies is also a way to right the wrongs of
structural racism.

It is for these reasons that I am encouraging you to **vote in support of Senate Bill 494.**
Thank you for your time, service, and consideration.

Sincerely,
Jan Kleinman
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Showing Up for Racial Justice Baltimore

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showing up for racial justice