

SB0053, Juvenile Law - Juvenile Interrogation Protection Act
Testimony in **Support**

To: Chair Smith and members of the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
From: Arielle Juberg, Baltimore MD 21234

My name is Arielle Juberg. I am a resident of Baltimore County in District 8. I belong to Showing Up for Racial Justice (SURJ) in Baltimore. SURJ is also working in collaboration with Out for Justice. I am testifying in **support** of SB0053, Juvenile Law - Juvenile Interrogation Protection Act.

SB0053 will require a law enforcement officer to contact a parent/guardian with reasonable notice and provide consultation with an attorney for any child they plan to interrogate. SB0053 matters to me because I believe we must consider young people's vulnerabilities in tense and scary moments.

When I first began driving at 17, I got into an accident. Another driver rear-ended my car on a busy freeway. I was shaking as I eased my car onto the shoulder and opened the door; I had never dealt with a car accident before as a driver. The other driver, who was older, attempted to talk me out of reporting the accident to the police. They said they were late for work, had experienced insurance hikes in the past, and asked to settle the issue by handing me the money in their wallet. In that moment, I was vulnerable, inexperienced, and scared. I was being talked out of my right to report the accident, obtain an official report, and receive insurance coverage for an accident that wasn't my fault. My experience pales in comparison to other youth, particularly youth encountering authority figures. However, it demonstrates how young people can experience uncertainty and coercion in an unfamiliar setting.

A well-known historical example of the consequences of children testifying without the presence of their parents or without having the opportunity to consult with legal counsel is the Central Park Five. In this case, police used intimidation and their role of the authority figure to coerce a group of minors into guilty pleas, even though no evidence for the guilt of the minors existed. As a result, these Black young men were imprisoned for years, only to have their convictions vacated years later.

Over 30 other states have legislation that provide these protections, yet Maryland's willingness to leave youth unprotected in one of the most stressful situations imaginable yields a perverse outcome: false confessions that traumatize and wrongly incriminate children, without making Maryland residents any safer.

It is for these reasons that I encourage you to **support** SB0053 to ensure children get the help they need before being interrogated by police. Thank you for your time, consideration, and service.