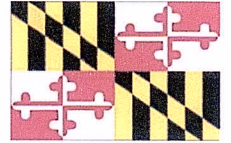




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February 27, 2023

HB 698 - Juvenile Law – Juvenile Court Jurisdiction – Age of Child

Dear Chairman Clippinger and Distinguished Members of the Judiciary Committee,

The Maryland State Fraternal Order of Police **SUPPORTS House Bill 698 - Juvenile Law – Juvenile Court Jurisdiction – Age of Child**. This bill will alter the age, from 13 years old to 11 years old, in which a juvenile is subject to the exclusive original jurisdiction of the Juvenile Court.

The passage of last year's Juvenile Justice reform laws enacted many changes to the juvenile justice system. One of which was the raising of the age of the jurisdiction of the Juvenile Court to 13. This change affected policy and procedures that had been in place since 1994 and has brought about unintended consequences that need to be remedied.

While the changing of the age of jurisdiction of the Juvenile Court last year was well intended, it took away the ability of law enforcement from referring cases to the Juvenile Court for adjudication for any juvenile under the age of 13. A specific example was related to a 12-year-old juvenile that brought a handgun and ammunition to school. Under the new law, the agency had no ability to charge the juvenile or to bring the matter to the Juvenile Court. While this is one example, others have also occurred and there are also other acts that should be considered crimes for juveniles under the age of 13.

There needs to be knowledge that actions have consequences and the current law doesn't make that the case in these instances. To not have consequences sends the wrong message. The decision as to what the consequences are and what actions should be taken has to lie with the Juvenile Court. The Juvenile Court must have the jurisdiction and ability to decide how to properly adjudicate these cases whether it should be formally within the juvenile system or through other means within the juvenile services arena. While we recognize that for certain crimes committed by juveniles there are alternative means to incarceration it should be at the discretion of the Juvenile Court and only after hearing all the facts and circumstances of the incident as well as the background and history of the juvenile and not via legislation that doesn't have the ability to consider every situation and circumstance that will occur.

On behalf of the more than 20,000 Courageous Men and Women of the Maryland Fraternal Order of Police we thank you for your support and ask for your **FAVORABLE** vote on **House Bill 698 - Juvenile Law – Juvenile Court Jurisdiction – Age of Child**.

Angelo L. Consoli Jr,
2nd Vice President, FOP, Maryland State Lodge
President, FOP Lodge 89, Prince George's County