

February 8, 2024  
David M. Friedman  
Silver Spring, MD 20905

**TESTIMONY ON HB319 - POSITION: UNFAVORABLE**  
**Juvenile Justice Restoration Act of 2024**

**TO:** Chair Clippinger, Vice Chair Bartlett, and members of the Judiciary Committee

**FROM:** David M. Friedman

**My name is David Friedman. I am a resident of District 14 in Colesville/Cloverly. I am submitting this testimony against HB319, Juvenile Justice Restoration Act of 2024.**

I am an active member of Oseh Shalom, a Jewish Reconstructionist congregation located in Laurel, MD. Jewish tradition emphasizes that the Divine encompasses both justice and mercy and that all of us deserve a life with dignity, respect and safety. I also closely followed the testimony, compelling stories, and research that resulted in passing the Juvenile Justice Reform Act (JJRA) in 2021 and the Child Interrogation Protection Act (CIPA) in 2022. Passage of both acts were based on an informed research-driven approach to combat juvenile crime by addressing the racial disparities and poor outcomes of overly punitive approaches. HB319 is an effort driven entirely by fear to roll back youth justice reforms only recently enacted by the General Assembly before any analysis of the impacts are even feasible.

Efforts to repeal JJRA through altering the jurisdiction of juvenile court to include jurisdiction of 10-12 year olds alleged to have committed a crime involving the use or possession of a firearm OR *any* crime if the child has been arrested on two prior occasions flies in the face of recommendations from the [Juvenile Justice Reform Council](#) (see p. 19). HB319's stipulation that parents, guardians, or custodians of a child can consent to the custodial interrogation of a child without the child's consultation with an attorney is simply insufficient protection for the human rights of children. Studies show that children make better decisions with legal support. I believe the public interest is best served when accountability interventions help young offenders to recognize the harm they have inflicted, take responsibility for their actions, and change their behavior.

HB319 mistakenly equates more accountability with increased punishment and is sponsored by prosecutors and lawmakers who scapegoat Black children rather than nurture them as the divine beings we know all children are. **I respectfully urge this committee to return an unfavorable report on HB319.**