



TESTIMONY TO THE SENATE JUDICIAL PROCEEDINGS COMMITTEE

SB 601– Minors Convicted as Adults - Sentencing - Transfer to Juvenile Court

POSITION: Favorable

BY: Linda Kohn, President

Date: February 15, 2024

The League of Women Voters of Maryland expresses strong endorsement for Maryland Senate Bill 601. The League of Women Voters believes this legislation is pivotal in addressing minors being convicted as adults. Its passage will significantly contribute to the welfare and progress of our state.

The League of Women Voters has a long-standing position on juvenile corrections and how the handling of it affects not only juveniles, but all people in Maryland. Since 1972 LWVMD has been committed to several principles for juvenile corrections, such as (a) the idea that juveniles deserve individually designed training and treatment programs and local or regional diagnostic services for juvenile offenders, (b) the use of specialized judges, (c) counseling services and administration of juvenile cases all geared to dealing with families. SB 601 aligns with these principles by allowing each and everyone to have a fair and speedy trial.

These provisions reflect a steadfast commitment to addressing persistent systemic inequities. Highlighting the urgency, according to the website of the Maryland Governor's Office of Crime Prevention, Youth and Victim Services, 396 juveniles were charged as adults in Maryland in 2022, with 91.9% being male and 93.9% between the ages of 16 and 17. Maryland Senate Bill 601 offers an opportunity to address these concerns and enhance an equitable process through our judicial system.

The League of Women Voters of Maryland strongly encourages a favorable report for SB 601.