



Montgomery County Commission on Juvenile Justice

Senator William C. Smith, Jr., Chair, Judicial Proceedings Committee
2 East Miller Senate Office Building
11 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Chair Smith:

The Montgomery County Commission on Juvenile Justice (MC CJJ) is writing in strong support of SB 53 – Child Interrogation Protection Act.

MC CJJ was established to advise the Montgomery County Executive, County Council and the Juvenile Court on matters concerning juvenile justice. Our work includes gathering and disseminating information from public and private agencies serving youth, monitoring the Juvenile Justice System, visiting facilities, and closely following State and County legislative proposals affecting juveniles. MC CJJ is composed of appointed, volunteer citizen members, and agency members that include the Child Welfare Services Program, the Montgomery County State's Attorney's Office, the Office of the Public Defender, the Montgomery County Police Department, Montgomery County Public Schools, and the Maryland Department of Juvenile Services.

The MC CJJ strongly supports Senate Bill 53. This legislation will require Maryland law enforcement officers to notify a child's parent, guardian, or custodian in a manner that will give actual notice prior to interrogating the child and ensure each child consults with counsel prior to law enforcement conducting a custodial interrogation of the child.

The current practice of interrogating children without counsel or guardian notification only heightens the chance of a false confession, enabling the actual perpetrators to wander the streets. In any event, the likelihood of a false confession is too high to forgo procedural safeguards.

If we wish for Maryland to have a fair and equitable justice system, we must ensure that youth are not coerced and incarcerated simply because they are children and do not understand their constitutional rights. The Child Interrogation Protection Act would better protect children's constitutional rights and better meet their needs.

We strongly urge you to support this bill and thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be the name of a representative of the Montgomery County Commission on Juvenile Justice.

Chris Jennison, Chair
Montgomery County Commission on Juvenile Justice



Tracey Friedlander, Vice-Chair
Montgomery County Commission on Juvenile Justice

