



Legislation Text

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Introductory*

**City of Baltimore
Council Bill R
(Resolution)**

Introduced by: Councilmember Stokes

A Resolution Entitled

A Council Resolution concerning

October - Youth Justice Awareness Month

For the purpose of declaring that October is Youth Justice Awareness Month.

Whereas, The historical role of the juvenile court system is to rehabilitate and treat youthful offenders, while holding them accountable and maintaining public safety, and is therefore better equipped to work with youth than the punitive nature of the adult criminal justice system; and

Whereas, Youth are developmentally different from adults, these differences having been documented by research on the adolescent brain and acknowledged by the U.S. and State supreme courts, and there are many state and federal laws that prohibit youth, under age 18, from taking on major adult responsibilities such as voting, jury duty, and military service; and

Whereas, Racial disparities, racial bias, and overt racism are central features of our criminal justice system and impact youth of color in profoundly negative ways; and

Whereas, Youth of color and youth with disabilities and mental health issues are disproportionately represented at all stages of the criminal justice system; and

Whereas, Youth who are placed under the commitment of the juvenile court system are able to access age appropriate services, education, and remain closer to their families, all of which reduces the likelihood of future offending; and

Whereas, Over 75,000 youth are tried, sentenced, or incarcerated as adults every year in the United States, and most of the youth are prosecuted for non-violent offenses; and

Whereas, Most laws allowing the prosecuting of youth as adults were enacted prior to research evidence by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, demonstrating that youth prosecuted in adult court actually decrease public safety as, on average, they are 34 percent more likely to commit future crimes than youth retained in the juvenile system; and

Whereas, Youth sentenced as adults receive an adult criminal record that deters future education or employment opportunities, and the collateral consequences normally applied in the adult justice system should not automatically apply to youth arrested for crimes before the age of 18; and

Whereas, Youth who receive extremely long sentences deserve an opportunity to demonstrate their potential to grow and change.

Now, therefore, be it resolved by the City Council of Baltimore, That the City Council declares October to be Youth Justice Awareness Month.

And be it further resolved, That a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Mayor, the Mayor's Office of Children and Family Success, and the Mayor's Legislative Liaison to the City Council.