

End Automatic Charging for All



[Maryland sends more young people to adult court based on offense type, per capita, than any other state except for Alabama.](#)

Maryland also ranks 4th highest in the country for the number of people convicted as adults when they were children according to a [2024 report](#) from Human Rights for Kids (HRFK).

We can and must treat our kids better. Maryland should join the 26 states who have passed laws to **treat kids like kids and strictly limit sending children to adult courts**. Six states (California, Hawaii, Kansas, Missouri, Oregon, and Texas) start all juvenile cases in juvenile court.

WHAT ENDING AUTOMATIC CHARGING MEANS:

We are asking for all cases involving youth (under age 18) to start in the juvenile system. Currently, teens are automatically charged as adults upon arrest, and sent to adult court, if they are accused of any of these [33 offenses](#).

CHILDREN CAN STILL BE CHARGED AS ADULTS:

Juvenile Judges and Magistrates decide who is released or held waiting for trial. Charging kids as juveniles instead of adults will not change this process. Teens charged with serious crimes can still be held in detention. **Kids can still be charged as adults and sent to adult court** if a prosecutor asks for a waiver. A judge will review the case and decide if it is in the best interest of public safety to move a child's case to the adult system.

BETTER FOR COMMUNITY SAFETY

- **Adult charging results in increased physical violence, sexual violence, and isolation.** Research shows that youth charged as adults are at increased risk of physical and sexual assault and isolation from their families, which may contribute to future criminality. **Ending automatic charging of kids as adults protects kids and improves their long term outcomes.**
- According to a [2024 HRFK report](#) about individuals incarcerated as children in Maryland:
 - ◆ Nearly 80% were placed in solitary confinement as children
 - ◆ Over 80% reported experiencing abuse from staff or other incarcerated people
 - ◆ Only 28% of people incarcerated as children have received treatment to address any of the various traumas they experienced prior to their incarceration
- **Charging kids as adults is not a deterrent.** An [analysis by Human Impact Report](#) concludes “that harshly punishing youth by trying them in the adult system has failed as an effective deterrent. Several large-scale studies have found higher recidivism rates among juveniles tried and sentenced in adult court than among youth charged with similar offenses in juvenile court.”

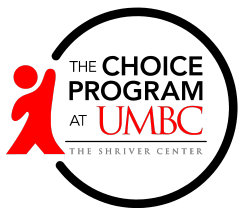
BETTER POLICY, MORE EFFICIENT & SAVES MONEY

- Automatic charging is inefficient. Between 2017-23, **more than 87% of Maryland cases where a youth was initially charged in adult court *did not* result in an adult criminal conviction.**
 - Starting juvenile cases in juvenile court saves time and money. Although less than 13% of youth charged in adult court end up with an adult criminal conviction, **the automatic filing process is extremely expensive & time consuming, costing over \$20 million a year.**
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REDUCES RACIAL DISPARITIES

- **Over 81% of youth charged in adult court in Maryland are Black.**
 - Black children are more likely to be prosecuted as adults and receive longer sentences than their white counterparts for similar offenses, in part because Black kids are more likely to be seen and treated as adults than white kids.
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WHO SUPPORTS ENDING AUTOCHARGING?



JEWES UNITED FOR JUSTICE
THINK JEWISHLY. ACT LOCALLY.

ACLU
Maryland



MARYLAND CATHOLIC CONFERENCE



THE SENTENCING PROJECT

MAYS
Maryland Association of Youth Service Bureaus



ADVANCE MARYLAND

OUT FOR JUSTICE

NATIONAL YOUTH JUSTICE NETWORK

Disability Rights Maryland

JCRC
JEWISH COMMUNITY RELATIONS COUNCIL OF GREATER WASHINGTON

Baltimore Jewish Council
An agency of The Associated

HUMAN RIGHTS for KIDS

UNIVERSITY OF BALTIMORE

Center for Criminal Justice Reform

Montgomery County Commission on Juvenile Justice

UNIVERSITY OF BALTIMORE

Sayra and Neil Meyerhoff Center for Families, Children and the Courts

RACIAL JUSTICE NOW!
DEDICATED TO ELIMINATING ANTI BLACK RACISM



UNIVERSITY of MARYLAND FRANCIS KING CAREY SCHOOL OF LAW GIBSON-BANKS CENTER FOR RACE AND THE LAW

THE ROAR CENTER
Rebuild, Overcome, and Rise