

**Press Statement from the Gibson-Banks Center for Race and the Law on the Maryland General Assembly's Passage of Senate Bill 323, the Youth Charging Reform Act**

**Contact: Laura Lee, 410-706-0023 (office), 410-382-9214(cell) [laura.lee@umaryland.edu](mailto:laura.lee@umaryland.edu)**

**Baltimore, MD (April 9, 2026).** This week, the Maryland General Assembly passed [Senate Bill 323](#) (SB 323), the Youth Charging Reform Act. The bill now awaits Governor Wes Moore's signature. SB 323 limits the number of offenses for which children are automatically charged as adults, routing most youth cases to juvenile court rather than adult criminal court. Monique Dixon, Executive Director, and Michael Pinard, The William H. Murphy, Jr., Faculty Director of the Gibson-Banks Center for Race and the Law at the University of Maryland Francis King Carey School of Law, released the following statement:

“We applaud the Maryland General Assembly for passing SB 323 and we urge Governor Wes Moore to sign it. While we have long advocated for the complete elimination of Maryland's harmful policy of automatically charging youth as adults, SB 323 is an important step in the right direction.

“Maryland’s policy of automatically charging children as adults [has proven](#) to be an inefficient, racially disproportionate, and harmful practice that traumatizes young people and disrupts their education and community connections. SB 323 will reduce the number of children subjected to this policy, though it does not eliminate the policy entirely.

“We view SB 323 as a vital foundation upon which we can continue to build. We remain committed to working with policy makers and youth justice advocates to achieve positive outcomes for Maryland's children and youth.”

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**About the Gibson-Banks Center for Race and the Law**

The [Gibson-Banks Center for Race and the Law](#) seeks to transform institutions and systems of racial inequality, marginalization, and oppression. Through education and engagement, advocacy, and research the Center collaborates with community members, government officials, and nonprofit organizations to examine and address persistent issues of historical and modern-day racial inequality and injustice across systems and institutions in the City of Baltimore, the State of Maryland, and nationwide.