



February 5, 2021

Corrections and Criminal Law  
Indiana House of Representatives  
200 West Washington Street  
Indianapolis, Indiana 46204

To Chairman Hon. Mike Young and Committee:

On behalf of Indiana Black Expo, Inc., I want to thank you for allowing IBE to provide written testimony regarding SB 368 and we ask that the letter be read into the record.

IBE has a long standing tradition of advocacy in our state including youth development and youth justice issues. I serve on the Policy Committee of the Children's Policy and Law Initiative of Indiana ("CPLI") and work with thousands of youth throughout the state of Indiana, including many youth that are disconnected and underrepresented. We have previously opposed attempts to lower the age for the direct filing of teenagers into adult court or charging them for adult offenses.

We support SB 368 for many of the same reasons we have opposed other legislation we felt was harmful to children. We recognize that Black youth are 2.5 times more likely than white students to be arrested by school police in Indiana. While black youth make up only 35% of youth in the juvenile system, they represent 70% of the children directly filed to adult court. This is not only a matter of justice, but these racial disparities signal a deeper problem of systemic racism.

As many as 80% of incarcerated youth have a mental disorder according to the International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health (2016). Indiana is one of only 5 states that does not have statewide juvenile competency to stand trial requirements. This means that various counties treat children different and that children with severe mental deficiencies have been subjected to delinquency proceedings to obtain services—a process that is not designed to meet their needs.

There is also the potential to lose funding if the legislature fails to act. Indiana could potentially lose up to \$800,000 a year in federal funding under the 2018 Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act.

IBE supports the following aspects of SB 368:

- 1) Prohibition against detention of minors in facilities for adults
- 2) Competency to stand trial in juvenile delinquency proceedings
- 3) Abolishing juvenile life without parole
- 4) Automatic expungement of juvenile records

For the reasons described above, we join the advocacy and professional organizations that serve our youth in supporting the positive provisions of SB 368.

Respectfully,

*Tanya Bell Mckinzie*

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Indiana Black Expo, Inc.