

HB 698 would reduce the minimum age at which juveniles could be charged as a juvenile delinquent from 13 years old to 11 years old. MAJR opposes this bill for many reasons:

- [Last year, the Maryland General Assembly after careful study increased the minimum age to 13 years old](#); this is an effort from those who opposed that bill to obtain a “do-over.”
- 11 year-olds (think of 5th and 6th graders) who get into fights or steal something more closely resemble younger children than young adults. Their mental and emotional state will benefit much more from parents’ discipline, child psychologists’, and school counselors’ efforts than police arrests, detention, and court records. See, for example, <https://jje.org/2019/05/20/diversion-positive-youth-development-restorative-practices-connecting-the-dots/>
- If parents are unable or unwilling to take appropriate action, current juvenile statutes already permit authorities to bring the parents’ into juvenile court to offer support needed via “child in need of assistance” or “child in need of supervision” cases. See Maryland Code, Courts Art., §3–801 and §3–8A–01