

Custodial Interrogation of Minors

Many U.S. states, including Maryland, allow police, during interrogations, to use lies to get a confession from the suspect. This might include false claims that there is DNA evidence, that one of the other suspects in a group already confessed, or has informed on the suspect. Statistics suggest that *children are persuaded by police to make false confessions at a rate three times higher than adults.*

HB 626 is an excellent bill to protect children from this dangerous and unfair practice. It would create a rebuttable presumption that statements made by minors during a custodial interrogation are involuntary and inadmissible as evidence if law enforcement officers intentionally used false information to induce the statements. The inadmissibility can be rebutted by prosecutors if they can offer clear and convincing evidence that the statements were voluntary.

Help us protect the rights of children in the hands of the police. Urge your representative to support HB626 this week!

Message to Legislator

Subject

Support the HB626, Custodial Interrogation of Minors - Admissibility of Statements

Body

As your constituent, I strongly appeal to you to support the HB626 – to limit the admissibility of statements made by juveniles when law enforcement officers intentionally used false information in order to induce the statements.

Maryland police during interrogations are permitted to lie to get a confession from the suspect. This can include false claims of DNA evidence, that other suspects in a group already confessed, or that someone has informed on the suspect. Statistics suggest that *children are persuaded by police to make false confessions at a rate three times higher than adults.*

HB626 would stop this practice in Maryland. It would create a rebuttable presumption that children's statements in response to police lies are involuntary and, therefore, inadmissible in court. But HB626 also provides reasonable limits on this presumption: 1) the law enforcement officers must know that the statements they are making are false, and 2) that they were used to elicit the statement. In addition, 3) if the State can prove that the statements made were voluntary, they may be admitted.

For all these reasons, as your constituent, I ask that you give a favorable report to HB 626 – a good and simple bill to eliminate this dangerous practice with those most likely to falsely confess!

Sincerely,

Jane Doe

Your Constituent