



AFRICAN AMERICAN COALITION OF INDIANAPOLIS – AACI

February 5, 2021

Hon. Mike Young
Corrections and Criminal Law Committee
Indiana State Senate
200 West Washington Street
Indianapolis, Indiana 46204

The African American Coalition of Indianapolis supports SB 368, and we ask that this letter of support is read into the record.

The African American Coalition of Indianapolis (AACI) is a non-partisan collaboration of African-American civic, social, professional, service and community organizations with a goal to educate and engage African Americans in the local, state and national political process.

We are particularly motivated to support SB 368 as our children too often are the victims of the school to prison pipeline. We know that Black children are 2.5 times more likely to be arrested by school police. While Black children make up only 35% of youth in the juvenile justice system, 70% of our children are directly filed to adult court.

Nationally, Black youth constitute 42.4% of juvenile life without parole sentences even though they only make up 23.2% of criminal homicide arrests.

We support key aspects of SB 368 which include the following:

- Removing children from jails while awaiting trial in the adult system
- Enacting juvenile competency to stand trial statutory framework including creation of legal standards, process for evaluation and assessment, and opportunities to divert children with mental health conditions, disability, and lack of cognitive understanding of the legal process
- Eliminating juvenile life without parole sentencing
- Automatic expungement of juvenile records

We believe SB 368 confronts systemic racism within a juvenile justice system that disproportionately consists of Black youth experiencing more contact with the system and harsher penalties, by improve the capacity of the system to work with our youth in an age-and developmentally appropriate way.

We will be judged by how we treat the most vulnerable among us. SB 368 improves the way we work with those who are among the most vulnerable in our society.

Most sincerely,

Willis Bright

Chairman
African American Coalition of Indianapolis