Background
The personal information of minors should remain private. This protection should extend to all youth including those who may be charged as adults but their cases are sent back to juvenile court or dismissed.

Currently, social media and news reports broadcast personal information of a youth charged as adult by regularly publishing the names and photographs on their websites, papers and television screens. If the case is dropped or sent back to juvenile court, where records are protected, the minor’s personal information is still available for all to see. The availability of this information means their past actions can be continually held against them even though they have learned from their mistakes.

Solution
The proposed bill preserves for our youth charged as adults the presumption of innocence and the degree of confidentiality commensurate with their young age. It extends existing juvenile confidentiality law to youth charged as adults pending the outcome of a determination on whether they will be tried in the juvenile or adult system. This bill carefully balances the needs of public safety and allows for the release of information if there is a young person that the police are seeking to apprehend for an offense for which a youth can be charged as an adult.

Impact
The nearly 300,000 youth in Maryland who are 14+ and have not yet celebrated their 18th birthday will never have their name publicly available, even if charged as an adult. They will be alleviated of the negative repercussions that public records have on future employment and education, as well as other potential biases held that are based in childhood.

Collaborating Partners
Maryland Youth Justice Coalition (MYJC)