

TESTIMONY OF NIREYSA HERNANDEZ

**JUDICIARY COMMITTEE
PUBLIC HEARING
APRIL 4, 2007**

**H.B. NO. 6285
AN ACT CONCERNING THE AGE OF A CHILD WITH RESPECT TO
JUVENILE COURT JURISDICTION**

Hello, My name is Nireysa Hernandez.

My son has been incarcerated at Manson for 5 months for a non violent crime and has not been sentenced. I am here today in support of Raise the Age. I strongly feel that children should be treated as children not as adults. I feel that by giving them the opportunity and a better direction these kids can very well become better members of society. I am here today to be a part of a better solution, as a parent, as a tax payer, as a good human being.

It is extremely heartbreaking for me to know that my son sits in a jail cell for 23 hours a day every single day. Can you imagine locking yourself in a small bathroom for 23 hours every single day sometimes without showering or a good hot meal? We hear that Manson has all of these programs, but realistically those programs are not available to kids like my son. I feel that his time in Manson has created more anger and confusion as well as a disconnection from a community. In his eyes no one cares about what happens to him.

I have experienced a whole lot and I could talk about it for days, but the reality is that a lot of these kids have come from environments where they have been abused and neglected. Some find it necessary to provide for themselves as well as their siblings because their parents are alcoholics, on drugs or sometimes even incarcerated.

So please if we can't provide good services for these kids, let's at least not do them a disservice by trying them in the adult system.

Thank you.