**SAMPLE EMAIL #1 THAT YOU CAN USE TO WRITE TO YOUR LEGISLATOR**

(Date)

RE: Supporting HB407/SB1492

Dear (Senator/Representative) (Last Name):

My name is (Your first and last name), and I am a resident of Jacksonville. As a constituent from your district, I am asking you to vote in support of HB407/SB1492.

Children are our most precious resource. They are little bundles of potential that we, as adults, have the responsibility and obligation to nurture and develop so they can reach their utmost potential. Sadly, we know this does not always happen. Many children do not have the support and guidance they need; in some cases, they do not have the physical and mental health treatments they need as well. However, they are still children, and they still have potential. They are not adults.

The decision to prosecute a child is a significant one, a severe one, and one that has life-altering consequences. It should not be done on a whim, be impacted by personal prejudices, or fall to the fate of one person’s emotions. It is too much power for one person to have. Prosecutors should not have the sole ability to make the decision to prosecute a child as an adult.

Likewise, children of any age should not be subject to the same punishments as adults. Seven-year-olds do not have the mental cognition to understand the full implications of their actions as adults do, so they should not be reprimanded as such. Children need to be treated and cared for as children, allowing the disciplinary process to truly be rehabilitative and set them up to become successful, productive adults in our society. Establishing that this applies to children 14 years of age or older as opposed to children of any age is definitely a step in the right direction.

President John F. Kennedy said that “children are the world’s most valuable resource and its best hope for the future.” It is our responsibility to help them reach that potential. Taking away that potential, that possibility, is a decision that should not be made casually nor without great thought and reference. It is for these reasons that I ask you to vote in support of HB407/SB1492. Our children are depending on us.

Sincerely,

Name

Street Address

City, State ZIP

**SAMPLE EMAIL #2 THAT YOU CAN USE TO WRITE TO YOUR LEGISLATOR**

(Date)

RE: Please Do Not Support HB7/SB148 and HB57/SB242

Dear (Senator/Representative) (Last Name):

My name is (Your first and last name), and I am a resident of Jacksonville. I am asking you not to support HB7/SB148 and HB57/SB242.

RE: Please Support HB407/SB1492

Dear (Senator/Representative) (Last Name):

My name is (Your first and last name), and I am a resident of Jacksonville. I am writing you today to ask you to support HB407/SB1492.

Children are not adults. This is a fact our legal system recognizes in a number of ways, from mandatory school attendance to harsher penalties for crimes against minors. Children are more vulnerable, emotional and impulsive, and they do not have the ability to remove themselves from homes or communities. They are also more likely to change as they grow up. So, we pass laws to protect children from their own poor decisions and from adults who would harm or take advantage of them.

These protections, however, have not applied to children accused of committing violent crimes. Currently, children as young as seven years old can be prosecuted as adults, held in an adult jail, and sentenced to extreme sentences in an adult prison. The law protects children younger than 14 because their brains are still developing. They have less judgment, maturity, and knowledge than adults, and children under 14 are even less responsible and more vulnerable than older teens. These protections shouldn’t vanish for children under 14 just because they have been accused of a crime.

HB407/SB1492 starts to restore some of those protections by ensuring that a prosecutor does not have the sole discretion to charge a child as an adult. It also makes the provision of charging a child as an adult only available to children 14 years of age or older. Younger children need discipline that is rehabilitative, restorative and designed for children, not the disciplinary measures we design for adults. Please vote in support of HB407/SB1492.

Warmest regards,

Name

Street Address

City, State ZIP

**SAMPLE PHONE SCRIPT THAT YOU CAN USE TO CONTACT YOUR LEGISLATOR**

Good morning/evening. I am calling to speak with (Senator/Representative) (Last Name).

My name is (your first and last name) and I am one of your constituents from Jacksonville. I am calling to ask you (or name of representative if you are speaking with an aide or a machine) not to support (House Bill 407) (Senate Bill 1492). Simply put, children are not adults, they should not be prosecuted as such. We simply want to ensure that one person does not have the ability to make such a monumental decision about the life of a child of any age, putting them in inappropriate conditions and robbing them of the opportunities to be truly rehabilitated. Seven-year-olds should not be able to be tried as adults because they are not adults. Therefore, I am asking you to support (House Bill 407) (Senate Bill 1492). Thank you so much for your consideration.