

MARYLAND JUDICIAL CONFERENCE
GOVERNMENT RELATIONS AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Hon. Mary Ellen Barbera
Chief Judge

187 Harry S. Truman Parkway
Annapolis, MD 21401

MEMORANDUM

TO: Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
FROM: Legislative Committee
Suzanne D. Pelz, Esq.
410-260-1523
RE: Senate Bill 594
Child Custody and Visitation – Abuse or Neglect of a Child
DATE: February 5, 2020
(2/18)
POSITION: Oppose

The Maryland Judiciary opposes Senate Bill 594. This bill requires a court, in a custody or visitation proceeding, to deny custody or visitation rights to a certain party under certain circumstances, unless the court states the reasons for a certain finding. This bill also alters the conditions of a certain supervised visitation arrangement that a court is authorized to approve.

It is not clear what “neutral and physically present supervision” means. The Judiciary is concerned this language would limit the court’s ability to order a supervised visitation arrangement that is in the best interest of each child. It should also be noted that not all counties have supervised visitation centers and courts often rely on appropriate family members and other individuals known to the family to supervise visits.

cc. Hon. Susan Lee
Judicial Council
Legislative Committee
Kelley O’Connor