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BILL NO.: **HB 369**

TITLE: Foster Parents, Preadoptive Parents, and Caregivers - Right to Intervene

SPONSOR: Delegate Dumais

COMMITTEE: Judiciary

POSITION: **OPPOSE**

DATE: February 6, 2020

Baltimore County **OPPOSES** House Bill 369 – Foster Parents, Preadoptive Parents, and Caregivers - Right to Intervene. This bill would establish a foster parent’s “right to intervene” in a proceeding involving the welfare or placement of a child.

Finding a permanent home for a child who has been placed into foster care is a serious responsibility of government. Foster care is an important arm of this function, and the foster parents who serve in this capacity should be lauded for their selflessness. However, for the development of the child, the permanence of the home is equally as important. It is for this reason that our laws have been designed with the knowledge that the speed with which a child is provided permanent housing is as important as the housing in which that child is placed.

This bill would significantly hinder that process by creating a third party where one did not previously exist by giving foster parents not only the right to be heard by the court, which they have now, but the right to intervene in court proceedings. Our judges are more than capable of determining whether parents are capable of exercising their right to raise the child. This legislation would unnecessarily extend the deliberative process with no added benefit to the families involved.

Accordingly, Baltimore County requests an **UNFAVORABLE** report on HB 369. For more information, please contact Chuck Conner, Chief Legislative Officer, at 443-900-6582.