

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: House Bill 505
Child Custody – Legal Decision Making and Parenting Time
DATE: March 23, 2021
(3/31)
POSITION: Support as amended

The Maryland Judiciary supports House Bill 505 as amended. This legislation would amend Title 9 of the Family Law Article (Child Custody and Visitation).

The amendments address the Judiciary's concerns by removing the need for the court to articulate each factor and the **weight** given to each. The amendments also allow flexibility for the court to issue a written opinion.

Further, the Judiciary supports the codification of the factors set forth in § 9-202(a) of the bill. These factors are consistent with those adopted by the Court of Appeals in Maryland 9-204.1 (Parenting plans). Their codification would increase transparency of custody determinations while maintaining the court's ability to consider a family's unique facts and circumstances.

cc. Hon. Kathleen Dumais
Judicial Council
Legislative Committee
Kelley O'Connor