

Written Testimony- Bill Blevins

In favor of HB-893

My name is Bill Blevins and my wife and I have been Resource (Foster) Parents for 2 years now through Baltimore City. I recently took on the role of President of the Baltimore City Resource Parent Association in order to help Resource Parents make the lives and outcomes of the children in our care better. Bill HB-893 puts the state on the right path toward that goal.

As a Resource Parent, I know what to expect when a new child is placed into our home. The many difficulties that the children face that lead them to be placed into care is heartbreaking and overwhelming at times. But we are prepared and trained to face them. We gladly face these many challenges to make the lives of the children in our care better and their ultimate placement outcomes more desirable to give them their deserved good foundation for the rest of their lives.

But what we aren't prepared for is the isolation that sometimes comes as part of the process. Being excluded from the very court rooms that should be searching for the insights that we can provide is irrational. Bill HB-893 allows us the opportunity to give valuable insights to the decision makers for them to make the best decisions for the children in our care. The overworked lawyers and social workers assigned to these children only get few precious minutes each month with them and then are tasked to do the heavy lifting in court representing them. This does not need to be the case.

Similar bills have passed and been implemented in 20 other states, including New York, Texas, California, and Colorado. This bill mirrors the Washington DC bill, specifically allowing Resource parents to become a party to the child's case if they have been in their care for more than 12 months.

Please allow us to better serve the underrepresented children of Maryland and support HB-893.

Sincerely,

Bill Blevins - President of the Baltimore City Resource Parent Association