

KATHLEEN M. DUMAIS
Legislative District 15
Montgomery County

Vice Chair
Economic Matters Committee

Chair
Property and Casualty Insurance
Subcommittee

House Chair
Joint Committee on Legislative Ethics



The Maryland House of Delegates
6 Bladen Street, Room 231
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
410-841-3052 · 301-858-3052
800-492-7122 Ext. 3052
Fax 410-841-3219 · 301-858-3219
Kathleen.Dumais@house.state.md.us

The Maryland House of Delegates

ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

February 18, 2021

Testimony in Support of House Bill 893 – Foster Parents, Kinship Parents, Preadoptive Parents, and Caregivers – Right to Intervene

Good afternoon Mr. Chairman and members of the committee. Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you on behalf of **House Bill 893 – Foster Parents, Kinship Parents, Preadoptive Parents, and Caregivers – Right to Intervene.**

Currently, in a court proceeding concerning a child, the child's foster parent, preadoptive parent, or caregiver must be given notice of the date, time, and location of a proceeding and the right to be heard. This measure adds kinship parents to those who must be given notice. This bill also establishes a right to intervene in certain proceedings for foster parents, kinship parents, preadoptive parents, and caregivers. Such intervention allows the court the opportunity to and benefit of understanding the interests and perspectives of additional individuals who have had significant interactions with the child.

A foster parent is not currently considered a party under law. This bill establishes that a foster parent who has exercised their right to intervene is considered a party. The bill extends to kinship parents rights foster parents have under current law. It also establishes a right to intervene for kinship parents as well as a right for both foster and kinship parents to obtain documented nonprivileged information pertaining to a child's placement. A kinship parent is someone who is related to the child by blood or marriage with whom the child may be placed for care.

The measure also requires the circuit court to give notice, in addition to the local department of social services. This requirement provides additional assurance that proper notice is served.

The purpose of the bill is to ensure that a court hears from all relevant individuals in child abuse and neglect, termination of parental rights, and adoption. Moreover, the measure provides foster and kinship parents added assurance of receiving information helpful to them in establishing a nurturing environment for children in their care.

Respectfully, I request a favorable report for House Bill 893.