



2/16/2021

To whom it may concern,

Our church Eldership, deacons, staff, other leadership, and congregation of 200+ adults are strongly in support of HB 0893 "Foster Parents, Kinship Parents, Preadoptive Parents, and Caregivers – Right to Intervene" sponsored by Delegate Dumais.

Our church has multiple families, including my own, whom foster children in Baltimore City, Baltimore County or Arundel County. We strongly feel that trained foster resource parents are often the best equipped to advocate for and understand the particular child(ren) placed in their home. Our families have had many poor interactions with DSS with our words and weight all but ignored by the system and courts.

Being able to communicate to the courts directly would be the best way for non-partial information be known to those deemed with the power to reunite or separate families. There has been multiple instances where a resources parents perspectives and knowledge about medical, emotional, physical and educational experiences and needs that if communicated to the courts directly, would only help the child and the bio families receive the assistance that they need so reunifications will be successful.

We personally have been denied our rights under existing Md. COURTS AND JUDICIAL PROCEEDINGS Code Ann. § 3-816.3 "The right to be heard in court". DSS's current stance is that resource parents are not foster parents but are emergency care givers and that this law does not apply to us. Your vote of "Yes" on HB 0893 will ensure foster parents, and all resources parents, have an opportunity to advocate for children and Bio-Families.

Thank you for your consideration and "Yes" on HB 0893.

Brian Zubek
Executive Director Sowebo Community Church
B.U.I.L.D. Member