

MARYLAND JUDICIAL CONFERENCE
GOVERNMENT RELATIONS AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Hon. Mary Ellen Barbera
Chief Judge

187 Harry S. Truman Parkway
Annapolis, MD 21401

MEMORANDUM

TO: House Judiciary Committee
FROM: Legislative Committee
Suzanne D. Pelz, Esq. (410-260-1523)
RE: House Bill 458
Family Law – Minors – Emancipation (Emancipation of Minors Act)
DATE: January 29, 2020
(2/6)
POSITION: Oppose

The Maryland Judiciary opposes House Bill 458. This bill would establish a process for a petition for the emancipation of a minor.

The bill provides that a court shall appoint a lawyer to serve as a best interest attorney for the petitioner but does not identify any funding source for the representation.

In addition, the bill requires the court to hold a hearing within 60 days after the petition is filed, which interferes with the court's docket management. The 60-day time period is also unrealistic, given service and response timelines, and the requirement to appoint a best interest attorney to investigate the petition.

cc. Hon. Vanessa Atterbeary
Judicial Council
Legislative Committee
Kelley O'Connor