



Bill No: HB748  
Title: Family Law – Child Custody and Visitation  
Committee: Judiciary  
Hearing: February 18, 2021  
Position: SUPPORT

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The Maryland Legislative Agenda for Women (MLAW) is a statewide coalition of women’s groups and individuals formed to provide a non-partisan, independent voice for Maryland women and families. MLAW’s purpose is to advocate for legislation affecting women and families. To accomplish this goal, MLAW creates an annual legislative agenda with issues voted on by MLAW members and endorsed by organizations and individuals from all over Maryland. **HB748 a priority on the [2021 MLAW Agenda](#) and we urge your support.**

The Courts are supposed to allow individuals access to justice, but for child custody disputes when there are allegations of child abuse or domestic violence, many victims are revictimised by the very institution designed to protect them. Across the county there is a growing problems with the acceptance of debunked junk science surrounding the Parental Alienation Syndrom. On top of that, judges are confused with existing Family Law Article 9-101, and fail to articulate what best interest of the child factors they weigh when they made rulings on child custody. In combination with the Daubret standard adoption, we must confront this space because the judiciary has no incentive for self examination.

Women will be better able to bring claims of abuse without fear that the very complaint to protect their child will be used against them during a custody proceeding. Judges apply the law improperly and pro se litigants have trouble with the common law best interest of the child standards. Codification of these standards and more clearly guiding judges and allow litigants to understand the proceedings and relevant factors. The articulation of the factors and application of the law should be paramount in this space that should be to protect women and children, not place them under increased stress and danger.

HB748 would clarify 9-101 of the family law article, and codify the best interest of the child factors. MLAW strongly urges the passage of HB748.

MLAW's 2021 Agenda is supported by the following organizations:

AAUW Anne Arundel County  
AAUW Easton Branch  
AAUW Kensington Rockville Branch  
American Association of University Women (AAUW) Maryland  
Anne Arundel County NOW  
Baltimore NOW (National Organization for Women)  
Bound for Better, Advocates for Domestic Violence Survivors  
Business and Professional Women Maryland  
Calvert County Commission for Women  
Cambridge Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.  
Charles County Commission for Women  
Childway Early Learning Center  
Church Women United  
Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., Annapolis Alumnae Chapter  
Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., Kappa Phi Chapter  
Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., Baltimore County Alumnae Chapter  
Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., Baltimore Metropolitan Alumnae Chapter  
Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., Fort Washington Alumnae Chapter  
Delta Sigma Theta Inc., Frederick County Alumnae Chapter  
Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., Harford County Alumnae Chapter  
Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., Kappa Psi Chapter  
Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., Montgomery County MD Alumnae Chapter  
Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., North Arundel County Alumnae Chapter  
Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., Potomac Valley Alumnae Chapter  
Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., Prince George's County Alumnae Chapter  
For All Seasons, Inc.  
Hug Don't Shoot  
Human Trafficking Prevention Project, University of Baltimore School of Law  
League of Women Voters of Prince George's County (LWVPGC)  
Lee Law, LLC  
Maryland Coalition Against Sexual Assault  
Maryland Family Network  
Maryland Justice Project  
Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence  
Maryland NOW  
Maryland Women's Heritage Center  
Mission 50  
MoCoWoMen  
Montgomery County Commission for Women  
Montgomery County NOW (National Organization for *Women*)  
Montgomery County Women's Democratic Club  
Montgomery County Young Democrats  
NARAL Pro-Choice Maryland  
National Coalition of 100 Black Women., Inc. Anne Arundel County Chapter  
National Coalition of 100 Black Women, Prince George's County Chapter  
Planned Parenthood of Maryland  
Planned Parenthood of Metropolitan Washington DC  
Prince George's County Drug Policy Coalition, Inc.  
Reproductive Justice Inside  
Stella's Girls Inc.  
The Rest Of A Life (TROAL)  
Top Ladies of Distinction  
Top Ladies of Distinction, Inc., Patuxent River Chapter  
Top Ladies of Distinction, Prince George's County Chapter  
UAW Local 1183  
WISE  
Women's Equality Day 2020 Celebration Coalition  
Women's Law Center of Maryland