

We are Joanne and Charlie Spalding. We live in Columbia, Md.

The Orphans court has been very helpful to us. We found the court efficient and approachable. The Orphans Court in Howard County helps to streamline a difficult process at a difficult time for citizens' lives. The Hearings we attended were organized and answers and direction were clear.

We see no good reason to subsume a well focused operation into a more broadly structured organization. The functions of the Orphans' Court will surely suffer degradation when shuffled into the myriad services the Circuit Court must currently provide. The financial impacts of this legislation are minimal at best, shifting at least \$36,900 to the State while saving the county \$55,000 (annual estimates). At worst, the State will incur a \$400,000 increase in expenses if an additional judge is needed to handle the increased workload.

For these reasons, we ask the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee to find HB868 unfavorable.