

HB0302 CPMC FAV JPR.pdf

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Position: FAV

THE COALITION TO PROTECT MARYLAND'S CHILDREN

Our Mission: To combine and amplify the power of organizations and citizens working together to keep children safe from abuse and neglect. We strive to secure budgetary and public policy resources to make meaningful and measurable improvements in safety, permanence, and wellbeing.



**HB0302 – Courts and Judicial Proceedings – Statement of Charges
– Human Services Workers
Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
March 26, 2025**

Position: SUPPORT

The Coalition to Protect Maryland's Children is a consortium of organizations and individuals formed in 1992 who are concerned about the care of Maryland's most vulnerable children and work together to promote meaningful child welfare reform. CPMC **urges a favorable report on HB0302 – Courts and Judicial Proceedings – Statement of Charges – Human Services Workers.**¹

Today we call on you to stand with us—and with Maryland's dedicated Adult and Child Protective Services caseworkers—by supporting this legislation. Each day caseworkers confront complex and often high-risk situations, performing their duties through home visits equipped with little more than an iPad and a phone. HB302 simply mandates that, when allegations arise from actions taken while carrying out official responsibilities, the State's Attorney must conduct a review and issue a recommendation *before* any criminal charges may proceed.

This safeguard is not about excusing wrongdoing — it is about shielding these professionals from groundless accusations that can derail their careers and weaken the very system designed to protect our communities. These public servants put themselves at risk to keep others safe—and deserve the same legal protections as other frontline workers.

Without this protection, we risk demoralizing and losing the very people who stand on the front lines of Maryland's child welfare and adult protection efforts. HB302 ensures fairness and due process for caseworkers, so they can continue their essential work without fear of unjust repercussions. Protecting these professionals against baseless charges is a necessary step in affirming our collective commitment to their work and the communities they serve.

It is for these reasons that the Coalition to Protect Maryland's Children **urges a favorable report on HB0302 – Courts and Judicial Proceedings – Statement of Charges – Human Services Workers.**

¹ Members of CPMC represented by this written testimony include Members of CPMC represented by this written testimony include Catholic Charities of Baltimore, Center for Hope, Child Justice, Citizens Review Board for Children, Court Appointed Special Advocates (MD CASA), Court Appointed Special Advocates (Baltimore County), Everstand, MD Chapter - American Academy of Pediatrics, Maryland Association of Resources for Families and Youth (MARFY), Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence, National Association of Social Workers – MD, and State Council on Child Abuse & Neglect (SCCAN)

NASW Maryland - 2025 HB 302 FAV - Statement of Cha

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Position: FAV



Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

March 26, 2025

**House Bill 302: Courts and Judicial Proceedings – State of Charges –
Human Services Workers**

****Support****

The National Association of Social Workers (NASW) is the largest professional organization representing social workers nationwide. The Maryland Chapter advocates on behalf of social workers across the state.

We respectfully urge your support for HB 302, critical legislation that extends essential protections to Adult Protective Services and Child Welfare caseworkers. HB 302 simply aligns these professionals with other public servants who are already safeguarded against false or retaliatory allegations stemming from their official duties.

Specifically, this bill would require the State’s Attorney to conduct an investigation and issue a recommendation before any charges can proceed when a caseworker is accused of an offense allegedly committed during the course of their work.

Given the high-stakes and often contentious nature of their responsibilities, these workers deserve the same procedural fairness already provided to other public servants. We ask for your support of HB 302 to ensure that these dedicated professionals can continue serving Maryland’s most vulnerable residents without undue risk of unjust prosecution.

We request a favorable report on House Bill 302.

Respectfully,

Judith Schagrin, LCSW-C
Children, Youth and Families Committee

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Position: FAV



OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

Marc Elrich
County Executive

March 26, 2025

TO: The Honorable Will C. Smith, Jr.
Chair, Judicial Proceedings Committee

FROM: Marc Elrich
County Executive

RE: House Bill 302 - Courts and Judicial Proceedings - Statement of Charges - Human Service Workers

Currently in State law, when an application filed in the District Court requests that a statement of criminal charges be filed against a law enforcement officer, emergency services personnel, or an educator for an offense allegedly committed in the course of executing their duties, the application is immediately forwarded to the State's Attorney. Upon receipt, the State's Attorney investigates the circumstances of the matter and makes a recommendation to the District Court Commissioner as to whether a statement of charges should be filed.¹ This additional level of review by the State's Attorney ensures that the application for charges is proper and is based on conduct that warrants criminal charges; HB 302 adds child welfare caseworkers and adult protective services workers to the occupations covered under Courts and Judicial Proceedings – Article §2-608, as these professionals interact with the public in potentially sensitive circumstances that are at times similar to or related to the work performed by law enforcement officers, emergency services personnel, and educators.

I support House Bill 302 because it would offer increased protections to Montgomery County employees who work every day to protect some of our most vulnerable residents. In this line of work, our employees often interact with residents in sensitive circumstances and in intimate spaces such as their homes. While the vast majority of these interactions are productive and lead to better outcomes for our residents, there have been occasions when our employees have faced potentially negative legal actions simply as retaliation for doing their jobs. These circumstances are damaging for the employees directly affected by the erroneous charges as well as for the morale of the department as a whole.

House Bill 302 would add an additional level of review of a statement of charges against child welfare caseworkers and adult protective services workers to ensure that these employees are not being unjustly targeted for doing their important work. If the charges are warranted after review by the State's Attorney, House Bill 302 does not change anything thereafter. Because the bill will help

¹ Courts and Judicial Proceedings Article §2-608.

The Honorable Will Smith
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ensure that justice is carried out only in appropriate circumstances, I respectfully urge the committee to issue a favorable report.