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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

January 30, 2025

RE: Testimony for HB0243: Family Law – Adoption of an Adult

Good afternoon, Chair Clippinger, Vice Chair Bartlett, and Members of the House Judiciary Committee.

For the record, I am Delegate Regina T. Boyce here to present **HB0243: Family Law – Adoption of an Adult**. For historical reference, this bill was introduced in 2024 as HB214, and in 2023 as HB1117.

HB243 alters the provisions of law for adopting an adult (18 years or older) to include the termination of parental rights (TPR), investigations of the parent, and a home study, where necessary. The legislation establishes that certain legal requirements, such as the issuance and service of a show-cause order on a prospective adoptee's parents, do not apply if the adoptee is an adult. It grants the court the authority to order investigations before ruling on adoption petitions involving adult adoptees, but only when there is good cause shown. Furthermore, the bill establishes that parental consent is not required for adult adoptions.

Adult adoption is common and occurs for a myriad of reasons. Some of those reasons include inheritance, medical decision-making, death of parents and/or relatives, stepchildren, or moving from a long-term foster relationship.

In the case of one of my constituents, she met the general parameters to adopt her son under the adoption laws, those under 18: abandonment, abuse, and lack of financial support, for instance. The adoptee was also international, with one parent in the United States and the other in another country. However, given the adoptee's age, 18 and over, the process required a host of steps deemed unnecessary for someone considered by law to be an adult.

In the context of adoptions involving minors, show-cause orders may be issued to notify the legal guardians, including known biological parents when applicable, granting them the opportunity to object to the adoption. HB 243 eliminates provisions requiring the issuance and service of a show-cause order for adult adoptions. The bill operates on the premise that adults, being capable decision-makers, have the right to autonomy in managing their own circumstances.

HB243 seeks to change the law to ensure no one goes through such an arduous ordeal and at times an unnecessary process.

Thank you for your time and consideration of HB243 and I ask for your favorable report.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Regina T. Boyce". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'R' and 'B'.

Delegate Regina T. Boyce