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Legislative District 12B
Anne Arundel County

Judiciary Committee
Subcommittees

Criminal Law and Procedure
Family and Juvenile Law



The Maryland House of Delegates
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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
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Good afternoon, Chair, Vice Chair, and members of the Committee.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak in support of House Bill 95. Marriage is a legally binding contract with significant personal, financial, and legal consequences. Requiring both parties to appear in person strengthens the integrity of the marriage license process by ensuring that each individual is fully informed, consenting, and properly identified at the time of application. This modest procedural change promotes transparency, accountability, and fairness within the system.

At the same time, we recognize that life does not always allow for perfect circumstances. For that reason, an amendment has been filed to address situations where a party is genuinely unable to appear in person. The amendment allows a clerk to accept an affidavit from both parties when one individual cannot appear due to military service, hospitalization, incarceration, or other good cause shown, as determined by the clerk.

This amendment is critical. It preserves the integrity and intent of the bill while ensuring compassion and common sense. It respects the realities faced by military families, individuals dealing with medical emergencies, and others navigating circumstances beyond their control, without weakening the safeguards HB 95 is designed to provide.

Importantly, this bill and the accompanying amendment do not impose additional fiscal or administrative burdens on the Judiciary or local circuit courts. Instead, they strengthen the process while maintaining accessibility and fairness.

Thank you for your time and thoughtful consideration.

Delegate Gary Simmons
Anne Arundel County, District 12b