

I am writing to urge this committee to support House Bill 369/Senate Bill 586, which is titled as the Court Intervention Bill. Though I could not attend in-person, I felt it absolutely necessary to share why this legislation is important to me, my family, and the children in foster care.

In September of 2019 my husband and I were approved as licensed foster parents in Anne Arundel County, Maryland. We received our first placement a few short months ago. A six-day old baby. Since having the baby for nearly 100 days, we have learned how broken the foster care system is.

We have not received notice of court dates and we have struggled to obtain the appropriate documentation regarding the baby's history, whether medically, physically, or how she came into foster care. If we, as foster parents, were able to obtain this information we would be able to make more educated decisions which would only benefit the child's well-being. Though I have been able to attend the court hearings thus far, I have only been able to do so because I actively sought out when they were to be held and where, otherwise I would not have been present. During the aforementioned court hearings, I was not acknowledged in the slightest. I do not need or want to be acknowledged for anything other than as a voice for a child who is unable to speak for themselves.

The passing of this legislation would vastly improve the process and allow foster parents to be a voice for the children in their care. As it stands now, those who spend the most time caring for the children in foster care have been silenced, unable to speak on behalf of or for a helpless child who has already endured more than necessary. How is it logical to meet in a courtroom to discuss the life of a child, where they should go, who they should be with, only to exclude the said child's caregiver?

I urge a favorable report on House Bill 369/Senate Bill 586. Thank you.

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