
To: Members of The House Judiciary Committee

From: MARYLAND STATE BAR FAMILY AND JUVENILE LAW SECTION COUNCIL – Ilene Glickman, Legislative Committee Chair and Daniel Renart, Legislative Committee Chair

Date: February 27, 2020

Subject: **House Bill 1337 – Family Law – Grandparent Visitation**

Position: **OPPOSE**

This testimony is submitted on behalf of the Family and Juvenile Law Section Council (“FJLSC”) of the Maryland State Bar Association (“MSBA”). The FJLSC is the formal representative of the Family and Juvenile Law Section of the MSBA, which promotes the objectives of the MSBA by improving the administration of justice in the field of family and juvenile law and, at the same time, tries to bring together the members of the MSBA who are concerned with family and juvenile laws and in reforms and improvements in such laws through legislation or otherwise. The FJLSC is charged with the general supervision and control of the affairs of the Section and authorized to act for the Section in any way in which the Section itself could act. The Section has over 1,200 attorney members. The Maryland State Bar Association (MSBA) Family and Juvenile Law Section **opposes House Bill 1337 – Family Law – Grandparent Visitation.**

This bill would allow access between grandparents and grandchildren, but only when the biological parents allow or are unable to grant consent. The only adversarial or contested form of addressing grandparent visitation in this statute would be if both parents are unable to consent and a grandparent is seeking some form of access. The other two prongs of this statute are when there is agreement by at least one of the biological parents to grant access between the grandparent and child. The Family and Juvenile Law Section Council opposes this statute because it does not realistically address the types of contested access issues that we generally see and there is no mechanism to provide access when the biological parents do not want to grant access to the grandparents, despite the access being in the best interest of the minor children.

For the reasons stated above, the MSBA **opposes House Bill 1337 and urges an unfavorable committee report.**



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