

# Vote FAVORABLE for SB0807

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I thank Senator Salling & your committee for hearing my testimony today in favor of SB807, Commission for (Men &) Fatherhood. I wrote the bill and created a fiscal note projection. Two points before the getting to the merits of the bill

- 1.) The Commission should focus on biological fatherhood; that was my request when I wrote it and posture Sen. Jill Carter favors. We of course need bi-partisan effort for passage
- 2.) I believe the fiscal note to be accurate (which is to say, this bill will save Maryland money, likely in its first year after passage). It should be understood that whoever is leading this commission must have an eye toward cost savings, etc. to allow this commission to be self-sustaining as well as a vehicle for cost savings through evaluation of systems, services, policies, family law which is harmful to society & state expenditures (as well as fathers, men and children).

One cannot refute the obvious areas of opportunity whereby promoting fatherhood will save Maryland money.

## **PLEASE READ & REVIEW**

I often provide testimony which is 4 to 8 pages in length. I will be offering brief personal testimony and then ask you to focus on the transcribe testimony of your colleagues in the Legislature as well as various statistics which paint the dismal picture of how Maryland discourages or downright denigrates fathers and fatherhood. So I'm asking you to critically review these graphics this time.

I am hopeful Annapolis honors the matter of fatherhood soon.

## **Circle Back**

If you've heard my testimony, you realize that I've been the only fathers' rights advocate who has showed up for such bills for the past decade. If I don't personally have the answer, or didn't happen upon in with my work at the largest child support office in Maryland, or with the largest parental assistance/juvenile prison system in Maryland or with various NGO's....well, I can usually get the answer for you.

## **Parentectomy:: Maryland Legislatures Unending Efforts to Cut Parents Out**

I formerly incepted & chaired the Maryland affiliate of the National Parents Organization. Once I saw that their efforts were largely theatrical, I honed my efforts as a solitary effort. I worked directly for the Sr. Operations Manager at the largest child-support agency in the state. I reported to the Division Chief/appellate attorney of the state's CINA unit, housed within Baltimore City Dept. of Juvenile Services.

I am not an attorney; I am a father. If my child had needed a baseball icon or an oil rigger for me to stay in my child's life, I would have wielded a baseball bat or a 2-foot pipe wrench... it just so happened my child needed someone who could "engage" the legal system and other systems that intersect with fatherhood. So I have learned what I could along the journey.

## **Politically Correct Testimony**

Queued to my testimony (after the German man) back when I was politically correct....

<http://mgahouse.maryland.gov/mga/play/88e6074a4f7b464f9c195bf77007f739/?catalog/03e481c7-8a42-4438-a7da-93ff74bdaa4c&playfrom=2460000>

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## **Tender-Year Doctrine**

So why do fathers need an attorney? Due to Maryland's longstanding "tender-year doctrine", favoring mothers in child custody outcomes. Because it was not just subjective bias by court/family law personnel; tender-year doctrine has been an established practice in Maryland.

“..Moreover, elevation of women's legal status during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries also contributed to the movement from 'paternal' to 'maternal' preference.<sup>8</sup> Maryland adopted the maternal preference presumption, considering mothers to be the natural custodians of young children,<sup>9</sup> and courts generally granted custody to mothers unless they were found to be unfit.<sup>10</sup>”

<http://scholarworks.law.ubalt.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1798&context=lf>

## **Fathers enter family law court with everyone but the fathers themselves knowing the pre-arranged outcome.**

### **Delegate M. Smigiel, House Judiciary on Del. Carter's HB1440 (2014) to Domestic Violence crow**

"... I sat in the court, in Cecil County, and heard the judge say, 'The child goes with the mother, because the calf always follows the heifer.' "

<http://mgahouse.maryland.gov/mga/play/88e6074a4f7b464f9c195bf77007f739/?catalog/03e481c7-8a42-4438-a7da-93ff74bdaa4c&playfrom=5070000>

### **Senator A. Muse, Senate Judiciary on SB1004 (previously SB1047)**

"...a simple bill....equal value to each parent in his or her role in rearing a child...

for decades a de facto presumption in FAVOR of the mother has existed in Maryland courts...

SB1047.. acknowledging that both parents should equally share in the responsibility of raising a child.... "

<https://mgahouse.maryland.gov/mga/play/a99d59956c754404a29ac652173973af/?catalog/03e481c7-8a42-4438-a7da-93ff74bdaa4c&playfrom=1432964>

<https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite/Legislation/Details/sb1004/?ys=2014rs>

## **Our children suffer when fit and good-enough biological fathers are not involved with their children**

### **Senator (former Delegate) Jill P. Carter, House Judiciary on HB1440 to Domestic Violence crow**

"...had we passed it when it made its way to the floor, a child would be ten years old...

many people are pro se litigants...they CERTAINLY cannot afford appeals...

when that ruling is made & that parent is essentially ejected at the

Circuit Court level from that child's life , [that's] a permanent decision....

It affects the entire rearing of that child...generations and generations of children that we often struggle to keep parents in the lives of children because we have so many, so many bad consequences resultant from fatherless children...children that are not having enough involvement, attention from fathers.”

<http://mgahouse.maryland.gov/mga/play/88e6074a4f7b464f9c195bf77007f739/?catalog/03e481c7-8a42-4438-a7da-93ff74bdaa4c&playfrom=5220000>

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## Our policies, systems and family law attack Maryland fathers

### Delegate D. Swain, House Judiciary on Senator Carter's HB1440 to Domestic Violence crow

"...my concern as a single-dad, I totally DIS-agree that there isn't a bias...

because I experienced that...

FROM THE BENCH ! ...

BY THE JUDGE ! ....

who specifically said that those things you said AREN'T said -- FROM THE BENCH !

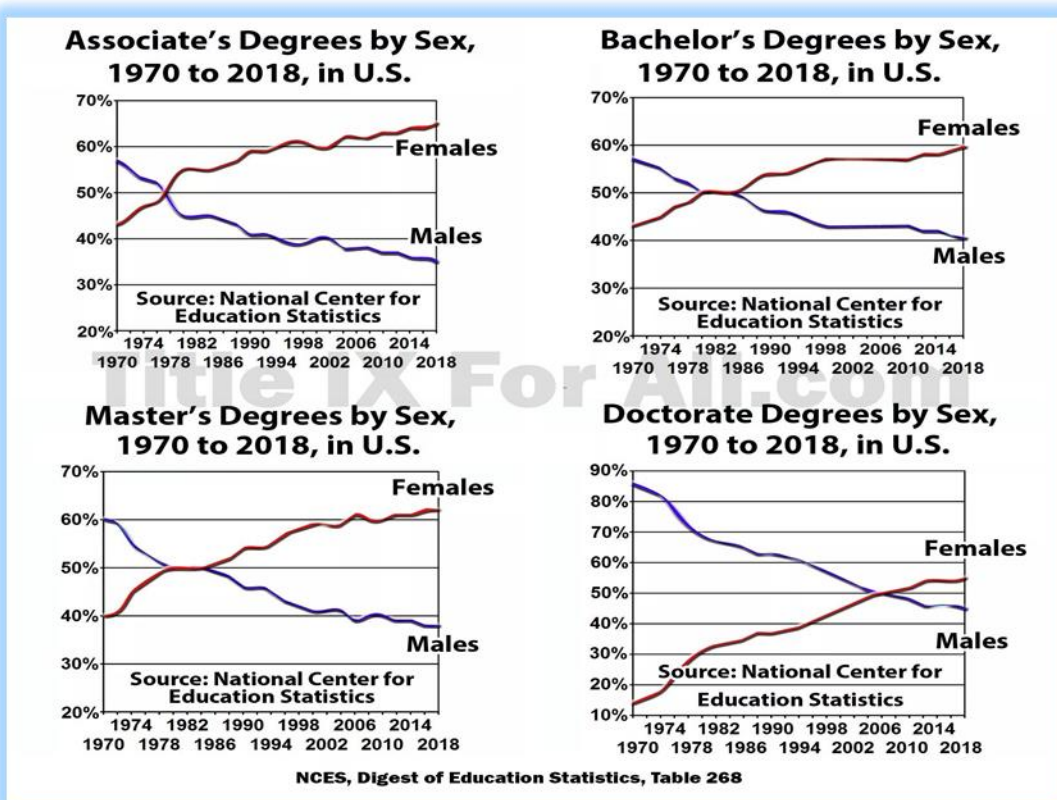
...To say that, I [take offense...what you said] is NOT true...

and when I hear people come in and make these assumptions that that shouldn't be the case, it really disturbs me...

the assumption should be that to the extent possible we should have both parents fully engaged and involved in a child's life...."

<http://mgahouse.maryland.gov/mga/play/88e6074a4f7b464f9c195bf77007f739/?catalog/03e481c7-8a42-4438-a7da-93ff74bdaa4c&playfrom=4175000>

## The State of Men & Fathers



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Research shows that fathers' involvement is important. A 2006 study from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services found that involved fathers increased academic and social achievement at all stages of childhood, and that adolescents in particular with highly involved dads had better verbal skills and higher overall achievement.

Mark Brentley Sr., school board member who founded and chairs the annual Take a Father to School Day, said that due to "the growing population of children who don't have access to their fathers,"

For Every 100 Girls/Women.....	There Are This Many Boys/Men....
Who take high school AP/Honors courses in Art/Music	54
Who earn an associate's degree	64
Who take high school AP/Honors courses in Foreign/Classical Languages	64
Who take high school AP/Honors courses in English/Language Arts	64
Who earn a master's degree	65
Who are enrolled in US colleges	71
25 to 29 years who have a master's degree	73
Who earn a bachelor's degree	74
Enrolled in US graduate schools	75
Who are in the top 10% of their high school class	79
Who take AP/Honors courses in Natural Sciences	79
25 to 29 years whose highest level of education is an associate's degree	81
25 to 29 years who have a first professional or doctor's degree	81
Who take high school AP/Honors courses in math	82
25 to 29 years whose highest level of education is a bachelor's degree	85
Who earn a doctor's degree	85
Whose entry into kindergarten is delayed	139
In public schools (K-12) classified as having mental retardation	140
Who repeat kindergarten	145
Ages 3-17 years diagnosed with communication disorders	168
Who abuse illicit drugs and alcohol	180
In K-12 and classified as having a specific learning disability	207
Who are homeless and unsheltered	232
25 to 34 years old who die	233
4-17 years old diagnosed with ADHD	237
Who are suspended from school	240
15 to 24 years who die	262
Expelled from public schools	291
Ages 15 to 19 who commit suicide	293
Who receive services in public schools for autism	300
Who die by opioid overdose	318
In public schools classified as having an emotional disturbance	355
Ages 20 to 29 who commit suicide	441
Incarcerated in local jails	614
Ages 20-29 who die of homicide	648
Who die on the job	1,171
Incarcerated in state and federal prisons	1,314
Incarcerated in federal prisons	1,387
Who died in combat in Afghanistan and Iraq	4,102
Who have been wounded in action in Afghanistan and Iraq	5,026

Carpe Diem 



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February 4, 2015

## How to Revive the American Dream In Blue-Collar America

By **W. Bradford Wilcox & Robert I. Lerman**

When it comes to marriage, the nation is increasingly divided. Among college-educated Americans the news about marriage is surprisingly **good**: divorce is down, nonmarital childbearing is rare, and the vast majority of children are raised in **stable**, married homes. But for Americans without college degrees, the news is **sobering**: divorce is high, nonmarital childbearing has never been higher, and **about half** of children will see their parents' marriage or relationship break down and spend a portion of their lives in a home headed by a single parent.

This growing marriage divide poses obvious problems for children being raised outside of an intact family in poor and working-class communities. It's now well known that children raised in an unstable or single-parent family are much less likely to acquire the human capital, and to avoid detours like a teenage pregnancy or a spell in prison, they need to flourish in today's increasingly competitive marketplace.

and family functioning: fatherhood is an important aspect of child development (Lamb, 2010; Lamb & Lewis, 2013; Pleck, 2010). Cohort studies have revealed the overall protective and positive effect of father involvement on offspring social, educational, behavioral, and psychological outcomes – throughout infancy, childhood, adolescence and adulthood. Short- and long-term positive outcomes include those pertaining to psychological health, externalizing and internalizing behavioral problems, **substance misuse, criminality or delinquency**, economic disadvantage, capacity for empathy, peer relationships, nontraditional attitudes to earning and child care, satisfaction with adult sexual partnerships, and self-esteem and life-satisfaction (Fatherhood Institute, 2013b; Feldman, Bamberger, & Kanat-Maymon, 2013; Flouri, 2005; Flouri & Buchanan, 2004; Kim, Mayes, Feldman, Leckman, & Swain, 2013; Martin, Ryan, & Brooks-Gunn, 2007; Pattnaik & Sriram, 2010; Pleck & Masciadrelli, 2004; Sarkadi, Kristiansson, Oberklaid, & Bremberg, 2008).

Disengaged and remote father-child interactions, as early as the third month of life, have been found to predict externalizing problems in children longitudinally (Ramchandani et al., 2013). Fathers' sensitiv-

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## Pope Addresses 'Fatherhood Crisis,' Reminding Men That Children Need Guidance (2408)

The Holy Father encouraged fathers to spend time with their children on Jan. 28.

BY CNA/EWTN NEWS 01/28/2015 Comments (4)

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VATICAN CITY — In his general audience catechesis on Jan. 28, Pope Francis turned to the role of fathers, saying that they play an irreplaceable role in family life, and their absence leaves children prey to false idols.

"When children feel neglected by fathers who focus only on their problems, on their work or their own personal realization, this creates a situation of orphans in the children and youth of today, who live disoriented, without the good example or prudent guidance of a father," the Pope said.

Pope Francis directed his words to pilgrims gathered in the Vatican's Paul VI Hall for his Wednesday address. Continuing his catechesis on the family, the Pope spoke on the theme of fatherhood.



Pope Francis greets pilgrims present in the Vatican's Paul VI Hall for his Jan. 28, 2015 general audience.

— Bohumil Petrik/CNA