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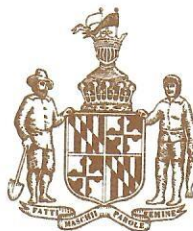
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House Bill 549 – Maryland Department of Health - Birth Registration - Gestational Carriers

Testimony of Delegate Joseline A. Peña-Melnyk (Favorable)

Good afternoon, Chairman Pendergrass and committee members, thank you for the opportunity to present House Bill 549. This bill would standardize protocols for the preparation of a birth certificate of a child born to a gestational carrier, someone who commonly has no genetic relation to the child.

Many adults with strong desires to become parents are unable to do so for a variety of reasons. Some individuals are infertile due to congenital defects or consequences due to radiation and toxins. Others are in same-sex relationships or have civil unions. Furthermore, some people do not have a spouse or partner. Regardless of individual circumstances, gestational carriers offer a means of achieving parenthood.

In these cases, the intended parents are required to apply for parentage through a Maryland Court of proper jurisdiction. The intention of House Bill 549 is to establish standards for intended parents and attending obstetricians or midwives on submitting information to the Maryland Department of Health's Division of Vital Records for the preparation of the child's official birth certificate.

This bill requires specific information to be recorded and sealed by Vital Records, which includes:

1. The delivery was by a gestational carrier
2. The identity of the gestational carrier
3. Relevant medical information regarding the gestational carrier and the delivery
4. Information regarding the intended parents

The Maryland Department of Health is required to adopt regulations to standardize these requirements, including sealing of the forms, and the registration of the certificate of birth in accordance with the order of the court.

House Bill 549 brings consistency to post-birth paperwork. It standardizes the process of providing birth certificates for children born in Maryland as a result of gestational surrogacy. The fiscal note states the bill would have no impact on the budget. Thank you for the opportunity to present House Bill 549. I respectfully request a favorable report.