

EMILY SHETTY
Legislative District 18
Montgomery County

Judiciary Committee



Annapolis Office
The Maryland House of Delegates
6 Bladen Street, Room 224
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
410-841-3181 · 301-858-3181
800-492-7122 Ext. 3181
Emily.Shetty@house.state.md.us

THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Testimony in Support of HB9 - Family Law - Mandatory Reporter Training

Chairman Smith, Vice-Chair Waldstreicher, and esteemed members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today in support of HB9, which would require the Department of Human Services to make available online a free course on child abuse prevention, identification, and reporting. This bill passed the Judiciary Committee unanimously with 20 votes. The House voted for HB9 on a consent calendar with 131 yeas and 4 nays.

As many on this Committee are aware, mandatory reporters of child abuse include health care practitioners, police officers, educators, and human service workers who are acting in a professional capacity and who have reason to believe that a child has been subjected to abuse or neglect. Although these individuals must notify a law enforcement agency or local department of social services if they suspect abuse or neglect, only certain mandatory reporters are required by law to take trainings on how to identify, prevent, and report suspected abuse.

By providing a free, easily accessible certification course on DHS' website, we can ensure that all youth-serving individuals such as ballet and karate instructors, Sunday school teachers, preschool teachers, and others have the tools to identify the signs of abuse, and know how to prevent and report it to the appropriate entity. This is all the more important now, as we have seen such a troubling increase in domestic violence cases throughout the pandemic due to heightened stress from school closures, loss of income, and social isolation.

This bill is identical to a bill (HB460) that passed the House of Delegates unanimously last year, but was unable to be considered by this Committee before our early adjournment. I am grateful to DHS for their support of this effort, and to the many colleagues and advocates who supported its passage both this session and last.

I respectfully request a favorable report of HB9. Thank you.