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Maryland State Senate
Judicial Proceedings Committee

Dear Honorable Committee Members,

I am writing to you today in opposition of SB355. I am a Licensed Psychologist in the State of Maryland and obtained my licensure in 2007. My practice includes seeing clients in a clinical setting for therapy as well as conducting Court ordered evaluations related to custody matters. To date, I have completed 235 psychological evaluations, 34 custody evaluations, and 1 contested adoption evaluation. I also serve as an expert witness in the field of psychology, and to date have been qualified 111 times in 8 jurisdictions in the state of Maryland and 1 in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

The training requirements outlined in SB355 are nearly impossible to meet without a program created and formalized by the Maryland Courts. It has taken me years of training and experience to meet the requirements included in SB355. All of these elements are important, however they are also elements that are included in a best practice approach to custody evaluations. For example, in 2006, the Association of Family and Conciliation Courts published "Model Standards of Practice for Child Custody Evaluation" and in 2016, published "Guidelines for Examining Intimate Partner Violence: A Supplement to the AFCC Model Standards of Practice for Child Custody Evaluation." These guidelines represent a comprehensive and best practice approach to child custody evaluations and requires screening for Intimate Partner Violence and Domestic Violence.

Before this bill is considered, the Maryland Judicial Education Center should create a comprehensive training program that includes the elements of SB355. The absence of a centralized training program greatly limits the pool of qualified and willing custody evaluators.

Thank you for your time and I look forward to your consideration of my testimony.

Respectfully submitted,



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