

CHANEL A. BRANCH
Legislative District 45
Baltimore City

Ways and Means Committee

Subcommittees

Early Childhood
Local Revenues



Annapolis Office
The Maryland House of Delegates
6 Bladen Street, Room 225
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
410-841-3257 · 301-858-3257
800-492-7122 Ext. 3257
Chanel.Branch@house.state.md.us

THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

TESTIMONY FOR JUDICIARY COMMITTEE

CHAIR LUKE CLIPPINGER

VICE CHAIR VANESSA ATTERBEARY

HOUSE BILL 0973: FAMILY LAW – GRANDPARENT VISITATION

SUPPORT

March 4, 2021

Good afternoon Chairman Clippinger, and Vice Chair Atterbeary. I come to you today to ask for your support for HB 0973 – Family Law – Grandparent Visitation. Some grandparents today are facing challenges to be present and active in the lives of their grandchildren. The death of a parent, divorce, and separation have been the cause of the disruption in the relationship between a grandparent and their grandchild. A study conducted at the University of Oxford notes, “Grandparents play a high-level role in the emotional and behavioral development of children.” Boston College has found that “an emotionally close relationship between grandparent and grandchild is associated with fewer symptoms of depression for both generations.”

Grandparents tend to have the patience and wisdom necessary to provide a stable foundation in the lives of their grandchildren amidst disruptions in the family structure. They are at times a listening ear, a mediator between parents and children, sound advice, and in some cases, provide financial assistance to support their grandchildren. Despite all of this, there are grandparents that are denied visitation and quality time with their grandchildren everyday, even in cases when the grandchildren desire to spend time with them as well. When grandparents are kept away from their grandchildren, it is the grandchildren who ultimately lose out on these important advantages.

However, this disruption in the family nuclei not only affects the grandchildren, but it also negatively impacts grandparents. Most grandparents have reported feeling happier spending time with their grandchildren. This is beneficial for their psychological health, as the more close of a bond between grandparent and grandchild, the stronger the anti-depressive perk.

Today I ask for a favorable report for HB 0973. Thank you for your time.