



ANTHONY B. COVINGTON

State's Attorney for Charles County

January 28, 2022

Maryland Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
William C. Smith, Jr., *Chair*
Miller Senate Office Building, 2 East Wing
11 Bladen St., Annapolis, MD 21401 – 1991

Re: Favorable Report for Senate Bill 20

Dear Chairman Smith and Members of the Committee:

The trauma (Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES)) children experience impact every part of the child's life to include their physical health as adults. There have been numerous published medical studies on ACES, the impact on health and what can be done to help reduce these longterm impacts. ACES include child abuse, witnessing domestic violence in the home, witnessing a homicide and more. Reducing trauma is one thing the courts can and should do when it comes to child victims and witnesses. Every time we question a child and make the child relive the trauma it re-traumatizes the child. This legislature and courts all over the country, under the *Daubert* standard, have recognized the inherent reliability and admissibility of properly conducted forensic interviews of children in child abuse cases (Criminal Procedure 11-304).

"A forensic interview of a child is a developmentally sensitive and legally sound method of gathering factual information regarding allegations of abuse or exposure to violence." "Vj ku' b gy qf 'tgeqi pk gu'vj cv' echildren don't just experience trauma if they are physically or sexually abused. They are traumatized when they are neglected by their caregiver or witness homicides and serious domestic violence in the home. Ensuring that our traumatized children have a proper forensic interview conducted by a certified forensic interviewer will help reduce the trauma the child experiences immediately after the event. Hwtj gt. 'r ermitting the courts to admit these'cffkkqpcnforensic interviews."cu'vj g{ 'f q'kpvtxky u'qh'ej kf tgp'y j q'ctg'r j { ulecm{ " qt'ugzwcm{ 'cdwugf. will further help to reduce that trauma.

Etlo kpcnRtqegf vtg"33/526'eqo gu'y kj "o cp{ 'uchgi wctf u'hqt 'c'etlo kpcn'f ghpf cpv."v'kpenxf g'vj g'ej kf " o wu'dg"34"qt" { qwpi gt. 'vj g'cdkxk{ 'v'f gr qug'vj g'hqtpule'kpvtxky gt'cpf 'tgs wtkpi 'vj g'ej kf "v'gukh{ 'cv'v'kcr0 Cf o kuukdkxk{ 'qh'vj g'hqtpule'kpvtxky 'ku'wnko cvgn{ 'f vgtg to kpgf "d{ 'vj g'Eqwt'v'chgt 'y gki j kpi 'cmh'cevtu0"Vj ku" dkn'o gtgn{ "gzr cpf u"33/526'kp"cp'gzvgo gn{ 'hko kvgf "o cppgt'vj cv'y knj gn "t'gf weg'vj g'vcwo c'qh'qwt" { qwpi guv' xlvko u'cpf 'y kpguugu0

I urge a favorable return of this bill.

Thank you,

K.A. Marsh

Kathryn A. Marsh

Special Victims Liaison, Assistant State's Attorney

1. CHRIS NEWLIN, LINDA CORDISCO STEELE, ANDRA CHAMBERLIN, JENNIFER ANDERSON, JULIE KENNISTON, AMY RUSSELL, HEATHER STEWART & VIOLA VAUGHAN-EDEN, OJJDP, 'CHILD FORENSIC INTERVIEWING: BEST PRACTICES 5 (Sept. 2015), <https://ojjdp.ojp.gov/sites/g/files/xyckuh176/files/pubs/248749.pdf> [<https://perma.cc/UD7PJU7Y>].



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