

## **HB 868 UnFv Nicole Miller**

Good Afternoon distinguished members of the Committee,

As a former (and possibly future) Judge of the Orphans' Court in Howard County, I want to share my perspective. The Orphans Court is an asset to each county that it exists in. It gives the citizens of the community a less formal court experience, which is helpful as the people are grieving and in need of speed and compassion. Orphans' Court is more welcoming, less intimidating, faster, and it is a part time position which makes it cost effective.

This court is of limited jurisdiction, specifically about probate and the Judges get specialized and ongoing education on these matters. It is better to have this Court than to add more work to the Circuit Court Judges (and their Clerks Office), who already have a big case load and little to no knowledge about probate.

If anyone strongly disagrees with a decision made by the Orphans' Court, they are able to file an appeal. During my four years on the Court, there were very few appeals and in each case our Orphans' Court decision was upheld.

This court was designed to be a panel of the peers of those it serves. They are individuals from the community and merge their different perspectives and experiences for the good of those they serve. The Judges are elected by the people and are accountable to the people. Please don't take this resource away from the people of Howard County.