

SB336 UNFAVORABLE
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To the Honorable Senators of the JPR:

I have already expressed my concern about all of the bills that were generated by the MD Workgroup to Study Child Custody Proceedings. The Workgroup was controlled by individuals who promote a gender biased agenda that it is divorced from factual reality and scientific research. As a result, none of its recommendations can be taken seriously or on face value. This is not a question of a legitimate scientific debate as some might claim; rather, it is a question of a social agenda masquerading as science and using the vast resources of the domestic violence industry to capture media attention and to deceive well intended legislators into formulating legislation that will foster this social agenda.

SB336 has many concerning features. First, it proposes to train custody evaluators that parental alienation is junk science and that it should not be an admissible claim in custody cases. As you are hopefully well aware by now, this is false. This fact alone exposes the agenda of the formulators of this legislation (i.e. they are willing to discredit established science to promote their own cause) and thereby discredits the whole bill.

Second, it lowers the bar for the acceptance of DV allegations to a degree that will indict innocent people and tarnish their reputations for life, cause a proliferation of false abuse claims, and facilitate parental alienation. One example of the lowered standards is the acceptance of "child therapy and expressive arts." These controversial therapies are reminiscent of the "memory wars" of the 1990's as well as the famous McMartin Preschool trial. Another example is the clause on page 4 lines 4-6 "*that the lack of a finding of indicted child abuse or child sexual abuse by law enforcement or a local department does not mean that child abuse or child sexual abuse did not occur.*" This "shoot first ask questions later" approach essentially promotes treating a person as guilty until proven innocent. This is a significant challenge to the legal principle of presumption of innocence.

Finally, it is the very same people who have promoted and designed this bill that will oversee the design and implementation of this pseudoscientific training. It is unacceptable to subject Maryland children and their parents to this self-serving indoctrination scheme of a segment of the DV industry. While changes are needed to insure that custody evaluators are sufficiently trained in DV issues as well as parental alienation matters, SB336 will not accomplish this goal. I therefore request that the JPR find this bill unfavorable in its totality. I once again encourage the JPR to formulate quality legislation to address custody issues by eliciting the input of legitimate domestic violence experts (who don't have a gender bias), parental alienation experts and shared parenting experts. I will be most willing to provide you with the contact information for many of the leaders in this field.

Respectfully yours,

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