

SB 8 cosponsor_Jackson.pdf

Uploaded by: Delores Kelley

Position: FAV

AFFIRMATION OF COSPONSORSHIP

Please fill in requested information, print and sign the form, then scan and return the form to the sponsor of the LR by email.

LR Number: 1178/538

Bill Title: TF to Study the Need for Enhanced Monitoring of Guardians of Vulnerable Minors

Senator Jackson intends to cosponsor the above-referenced LR for introduction in the Senate.

Signature: _____

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized, cursive 'J' followed by a large loop and a horizontal line extending to the right.

Senator Kelley - Updated Testimony

Uploaded by: Delores Kelley

Position: FAV

SENATOR DELORES G. KELLEY
Legislative District 10
Baltimore County

—
Chair
Finance Committee

—
Executive Nominations Committee
Rules Committee
Legislative Policy Committee



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THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

TESTIMONY OF SENATOR DELORES G. KELLEY
REGARDING SENATE BILL 8-TASK FORCE TO STUDY THE NEED
FOR ENHANCED MONITORING OF GUARDIANS OF VULNERABLE
MINORS
BEFORE THE SENATE JUDICIAL PROCEEDINGS COMMITTEE
ON JANUARY 26, 2022

Mr. Chairman and Members:

Senate Bill 8 is here because of grave concerns regarding the health, welfare, and education of untold numbers of Maryland children who are more vulnerable than usual during this pandemic.

Many such children are in formal guardianships, per Subtitle 3 of the Family Law Article, but a much larger number of Maryland's most vulnerable children are likely those in kinship care, a category of children for whom the Department of Human Services had some oversight, responsibilities, but limited budget and/or staff even before the pandemic.

Before the pandemic, the Department depended upon school personnel to report on children whose care and welfare appeared to be questionable. With much of Maryland pre-K-12 public education having been virtual, rather than in-person since the start of the pandemic, we have lost any systematic reporting on child welfare by teachers, guidance counselors, or school social workers.

At the same time, many vulnerable children have had to become caregivers for younger siblings (including infants), as well as for elderly family members, while in many such cases their communities have no broadband service, and families cannot afford internet service, thereby making virtual education impossible for these kids, a negative impact on their health and general welfare.

Senate Bill 8 is here to help foster some systematic fact finding on the welfare and on the mental and physical health of vulnerable kids whose physical, mental, emotional and educational welfare cannot be monitored or addressed unless we know the extent of the problem. It is hoped that some of the federal funds received by Maryland to address impacts of the pandemic will be

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reserved to address the ongoing, physical, mental, psychological, and educational needs of our most vulnerable children, and the Task Force Proposal which is Senate Bill 8 , is offered as a mechanism for clarifying the extent of the problem, and for determining the modalities and budget necessary to address the findings of the recommended Task Force. The Task Force representation is broad, and includes many disciplines and perspectives.

I am including an amendment to add Senator Michael Jackson as a co-sponsor.

In light of all of these considerations, I ask for your strong support of Senate Bill 8.

SB 8 - Guardianship Task Force - CPD - Support.pdf

Uploaded by: Steven Sakamoto-Wengel

Position: FAV

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Deputy Attorney General



STATE OF MARYLAND
OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL
CONSUMER PROTECTION DIVISION

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January 26, 2022

To: The Honorable William C. Smith, Jr.
Chair, Judicial Proceedings Committee

From: Steven M. Sakamoto-Wengel
Consumer Protection Division

Re: Senate Bill 8 – Task Force to Study the Need for Enhanced Monitoring of Guardians of
Vulnerable Minors (SUPPORT)

The Office of the Attorney General supports Senate Bill 8, sponsored by Senators Kelley, Sydnor, Waldstreicher and West, which would establish a Task Force to study the processes by which the State and local governments currently monitor guardians of vulnerable minors for: (i) mismanagement of the assets and finances of vulnerable minors; (ii) neglect of vulnerable minors; and (iii) abuse of vulnerable minors. The Task Force would make recommendations on whether there is a need for enhanced monitoring of the guardians of vulnerable minors, including any necessary regulatory changes or legislation.

The Office's Consumer Protection Division was given authority by the General Assembly to assist senior citizens and vulnerable adults who have been victims of financial exploitation to recover the assets taken from them. However, there is no comparable program to protect vulnerable minors who have been the victims of financial exploitation by court-appointed guardians. The attorney who handles matters involving financial exploitation of vulnerable adults has been advised of cases in which guardians have financially exploited the minors in their care and the courts have expressed an inability to take meaningful action. We believe that a study of gaps in the protections available to vulnerable minors would be an important step.

Consequently, the Office of the Attorney General requests that the Judicial Proceedings Committee give Senate Bill 8 a favorable report.

cc: The Honorable Delores G. Kelley
The Honorable Charles Sydnor
The Honorable Jeff Waldstreicher
The Honorable Chris West
Members, Judicial Proceedings Committee

SB0008-JPR_MACo_SWA.pdf

Uploaded by: D'Paul Nibber

Position: FWA



Senate Bill 8

Task Force to Study the Need for Enhanced Monitoring of Guardians of Vulnerable Minors

MACo Position: **SUPPORT**
WITH AMENDMENTS

To: Judicial Proceedings Committee

Date: January 26, 2022

From: D'Paul Nibber

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS SB 8 WITH AMENDMENTS**. This bill would establish a task force to study the need for enhanced monitoring, including state and local processes, of guardians of vulnerable minors.

One of the core functions of local departments of social services is to act as guardians for children in need of assistance, as determined by a juvenile court. Numerous county governments augment these functions with their own citizen services agencies, by various names. In this capacity, these departments operate a number of different programs including screenings and assessments, as well as protective services. Understanding the extensive role local governments play in protecting vulnerable minors under guardianship, MACo requests the following friendly amendment to SB 8:

- On page 2, line 10, insert “**(V) THE MARYLAND ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES**”

MACo's amendment would further the work of the task force to be established by SB 8 through the inclusion of local government representation with in-depth knowledge of current guardianship protocols and any gaps that may exist. For this reason, MACo urges a report of **FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS** for SB 8.