

THE COALITION TO PROTECT MARYLAND'S CHILDREN

Our Mission: To combine and amplify the power of organizations and citizens working together to keep children safe from abuse and neglect. We strive to secure the budgetary and public policy resources to make meaningful and measurable improvements in safety, permanence, and well-being.

Testimony before the House Judiciary Committee
Bill # HB 948: Sex Offenders - Informal Child Care Services - Prohibition

SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENTS

February 22, 2022

The Coalition to Protect Maryland's Children (CPMC) is a consortium of Maryland organizations and individuals formed in 1996 to promote meaningful child welfare reform.

CPMC **supports** passage of HB 948: Sex Offenders - Informal Child Care Services – Prohibition.

House Bill 948 would prohibit registered sex offenders from providing informal childcare. Registered sex offenders have been criminally convicted of sex offenses. Children left in their care are at increased risk of being sexually abused by that caregiver. This component of the legislation makes sense, as it may help protect children.

HB948 would allow registered sex offenders to provide informal child care if they advise a parent or guardian that they are required to register and the parent or guardian provides written permission to provide care. CPMC respectfully opposes these provisions because an offender may minimize the crime and may not understand the potential risk to their child. Furthermore, as the bill is currently drafted, the written permission does not have to include any information about the conviction. This omission makes it impossible to determine whether the caregiver has all of the facts about the criminal conviction, or whether the caregiver has any facts at all. CPMC requests that HB 948 be amended by striking page 2, lines 26-33.

For all of these reasons we urge a favorable committee report on HB 948: Sex Offenders – Informal Child Care Services – Prohibition; BUT ONLY WITH PROPOSED AMENDMENTS.