
To: Members of The Ways and Means Committee

From: Family & Juvenile Law Section Council (FJLSC)

Date: February 25, 2022

Subject: **House Bill 953:**
Parent and Guardian Rights- Education, Health, and Upbringing of Children

Position: **OPPOSE**

The Maryland State Bar Association (MSBA) FJLSC **OPPOSES House Bill 953 – Definition of Neglect.**

This testimony is submitted on behalf of the Family and Juvenile Law Section Council (“FJLSC”) of the Maryland State Bar Association (“MSBA”). The FJLSC is the formal representative of the Family and Juvenile Law Section of the MSBA, which promotes the objectives of the MSBA by improving the administration of justice in the field of family and juvenile law and, at the same time, tries to bring together the members of the MSBA who are concerned with family and juvenile laws and in reforms and improvements in such laws through legislation or otherwise. The FJLSC is charged with the general supervision and control of the affairs of the Section and authorized to act for the Section in any way in which the Section itself could act. The Section has over 1,200 attorney members.

This testimony focuses on HB953’s proposed Parental Rights Act/Parents’ Bill of Rights (creating a subtitle 15 of the Family Law Article of the Maryland Code). FJLSC opposes HB953 because it does not take into account many contradictory, preexisting aspects of existing law. For example, CINA and termination of parental rights, children’s legal authority to consent to certain types of medical and mental healthcare, to name a few. HB953 is overly broad and invites conflict, rather than clarity, in the law. HB953 violates §29 of the Maryland Constitution: “every Law enacted by the General Assembly shall embrace but one subject”.

For all these reasons, the Family and Juvenile Law Section Council of the MSBA urges the Committee to issue an unfavorable report on House Bill 953.

Should you have any questions, please contact Lindsay Parvis by email at lparvis@jgllaw.com.