

Testimony in Favor of SB0383
February 15, 2023

Arif Syed Ahmad
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February 9th, 2023

Dear Honorable Members of the Maryland General Assembly,

My name is Arif Syed Ahmad and I am a proud parent who had the privilege of raising my child as a stay-at-home father, who has experienced the heartbreak and trauma of what is determined as parental abduction, where my child remains at high risk of being abducted internationally.

Parental abduction can be referred to the act of a parent unlawfully taking, retaining, or concealing a child from the other parent, family members custodians with the intention of depriving them of their rightful parental responsibilities and time with the child.

Parental abduction of a child whether domestic or international, is a serious issue affecting countless families across Maryland and the country. It is a selfish, self centered act and should be looked at as a crime.

As a parent, there is nothing more traumatizing and devastating than being separated from your child, and then to face significant difficulties in attempting to secure the child's return, where the child's safety and well-being remains at risk with serious emotional and psychological harm that will have an impact on the rest of their life's.

Almost 3 years ago during the height of Covid pandemic, my child was removed from the state without my knowledge or the court's consent and I have been struggling ever since to locate and regain custody of my child, only to face 03 postponements in the past 2 years. The discretionary and apathetic use of response by authorities is failing families like mine.

There is a lack of clear guidelines and legislation has led to an increase in these cases and placed children at risk and would urge the Maryland General Assembly to take action to better protect the rights and safety of children.

I strongly support the Senate Bill 0383 which aims to improve the response to and prevention of domestic and international parental abduction cases. I urge you to pass this bill and help bring an end to the trauma and uncertainty faced by families like mine.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Arif Syed Ahmad