

Testimony testify in favor of SB0383

Nicole Priola Ph. (410)790-0066 Woodbine, MD

My name is Nicole Priola and I am here to testify **in favor** of SB0383 the Maryland Child Abduction Prevention Act. I would like to explain a small portion of what my brother has had to go through trying to have his son returned after being Internationally Abducted.

My Nephew August Priola was abducted from Hawaii to Greece on September 5, 2017 by his biological mother Manto Nikolaidou. His now ex-wife, a Greek Citizen, used the U.S. courts making false allegations against my brother, filing a temporary Protective Order to have him removed from the home so she could leave the country with their then 2-year-old son. Anthony informed the local police and courts she was planning to abduct his son, and requested that his son's passport be turned over to the courts, but they refused. The Protective Order was dismissed, He along with my mother and brother went back to his home, found it ransacked, his wife and son missing. He found that she had left Hawaii and was at LAX. The Hawaii Police department in Hilo refused his request to enter his child into the National Crime Information Center Missing Persons File. Due to this negligence by law enforcement she was able to leave the country with their son.

Anthony has Full Physical and Legal Custody of his son who is now 7. There are U.S. return orders, and warrants for her arrest and still receiving no help. **Although Greece is a signatory of the Hague Convention of International Parental Abduction**, we have not found one documented case where Greece has returned a child. Greece, like many other countries who have violated the Hague treaty, are still on the compliance list with the US Department of State.

Anthony has been in Greece for court several times since the Abduction of his son. He has limited virtual communication. In one Skype call Anthony noticed marks on his son's neck and a bruise on his collarbone. When he asked August about the markings he tried to cover them and then said the man upstairs did it. Immediately his mother turned off the computer. Anthony was able to get a photo before she turned off the computer and reported the abuse to the FBI, US Embassy in Greece, The US State Department, His attorneys, and child services in Greece. Nothing was done. During his last visit to Greece visiting his son He saw bruises once again. He attempted to report it to the local police in Greece and The US Embassy in Greece, but of course nothing was done. As any parent would do He attempted to rescue his son. He ended up being arrested and wrongfully retained in Greece for 7 days before being released and was not charged. His son at the police station informed the police officers that he was afraid of his mother and the man she brought with her. He kicked and screamed and cried that he did not want to go with her and he wanted his daddy. Anthony has not been able to return to Greece and visit his son since November of 2020. Every Hague decision made in this case has been a clear violation of the treaty.

We, like so many other left behind parents and families, have to go through so many obstacles to get help to return our children. I had no idea how common parental abduction was until it happened to our family. We had to educate ourselves, and realized most information given to parents by law enforcement regarding Parental Abduction is incorrect. Currently over 1000 children have been parentally abducted from the US taken to another country and as you have heard today the struggles we face to return them. It all starts with prevention. Passing this bill and providing education on Parental Abduction to Judges, lawyers, and Law enforcement will not help bring my nephew home but will be a step in preventing future parental abductions. Thank you

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Aiden Priola Ph. (410)790-0066 Woodbine, MD

My name is Aiden Priola. I am 13 and August is my cousin. Unfortunately I only met him when he was a baby because he was abducted by his mother. His mother does not allow any of us to see him or talk to him. When my Uncle comes to visit us and has Skype calls with Oggy if his mother sees anyone else on the call she hangs it up.

I have watched my mom & Nana many times up all night trying to get help from anyone. My Uncle does not deserve this And neither does my cousin. Parental Abduction is child abuse and anything you can do to prevent any other child from being abducted Needs to be done now! Thank you!