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March 14, 2023

Maryland General Assembly
Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee
Annapolis, MD

RE: SB 566 – Family Law – Fundamental Parental Rights

Dear Senators,

We support SB 566 and respectfully request that you vote for it.

A parent has the authority to bring up their own child according to their personal beliefs and the best interests of the child and family.

It is not the State's job to dictate to parents what the State thinks is right for children. It opens up too much potential for government overreach into a family's private life. An example is the recent attempt to force vaccinations onto people who did not want them.

Not all things that the State thinks are in the best interest of the people and children are actually the best based, on the people's individual rights and preferences.

Other points in favor of this bill are:

This bill upholds the fundamental rights of parents to direct the upbringing, education, care, and welfare of their children, which have been under attack this session in certain proposed legislation.

Parents are tax-paying citizens and have the right to engage in civic participation in the development and implementation of public school programs and curricula.

Parents have the fundamental right to direct and to refuse any medical treatments or interventions which might be administered to students in school settings.

Parents must retain the fundamental right to discover and direct the care of their children while those children are attending school, including the full content of information to which the children are exposed, and any medical treatment or intervention, including mental healthcare, administered.

Parents demonstrably have the highest vested interest in their children's welfare and are best equipped to make important decisions for their children regarding their care.

The state provides remedies for rare cases in which children are living in circumstances of abuse and neglect. There is no context in which it's necessary or appropriate for the state legislature to pass laws that undermine or usurp the authority of all parents, the vast majority of whom provide much better care and decision-making for their children than the state is capable of providing.

The Supreme Court ruled in 1979: “Most children, even in adolescence, simply are not able to make sound judgments concerning many decisions, including their need for medical care or treatment. Parents can and must make those judgments.”

Sincerely,

Christine Hunt and Jay Crouthers