

SB566- Fundamental Parental Rights- Favorable

I am Laura Hartman and a lifetime resident of MD. I am writing to testify today for what I believe is the fundamental right of every parent. I'm quite frankly concerned that we even need to have a bill like this. Parental rights are a fundamental right for every child born in Maryland. Being a parent is one of the greatest blessings ever and we need to protect all of Maryland citizens, as parents and children.

As mammals, the basic biology of parents is to feed, nurture and protect their young. Each species handles parental roles differently but in our civilized society, parents and families take on this vital responsibility.

The valuable bond between parent and child is something I didn't fully understand until I became a mother. Parents come in all shapes and sizes and we want to celebrate that. We want to further instill the Supreme Court's decision to recognize parents and give them the legal rights that they deserve here in MD.

While there are many divisive issues in the world of politics, parental rights are not one of them. Parents should be involved and have legal rights to raise their child/ family as they see fit. A 2010 Zogby poll shows that 94% of the population (no matter demographics) believe *parents have the constitutional right to make decisions for their children without government interference unless there is proof of abuse or neglect.*

Many studies show that children do not have fully developed brains until the age of 25, yet we don't ensure the people tasked with guiding their decisions have legal rights to protect their children.

I believe that parents should have the right to direct their child's medical care, educational care, physical and emotional development, access to religious beliefs, and cultural enrichment, etc. As parents, we have a financial, moral, ethical and educational responsibility to our children.

I'd like you to think back to when you were a child. Can you imagine if you didn't have your parents there to make decisions for you and teach you right from wrong with love and protection? Parents are there to guide their children through right and wrong, hope and sadness, grief and joy and most importantly through safety.

Now imagine, when you find out your child's teacher is teaching your child something against your values and you ask for the curriculum and want to talk to someone to better understand and the either ignore your requests or tell you they won't give it to you?

What if you are Jewish and your mother-in-law wants her grandchild to attend a Christian school? How can you protect your child?

What if you are black and you are well aware of the history of experimental medical issues within the black community? But your doctor wants you to perform a medical procedure on your child that you aren't comfortable with?

The Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr., said, **"Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere."** I ask for your favorable vote on HB666.