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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

**FAVORABLE – HB267 - Family Law - Custody and Visitation - Notice of Intent to Travel
(Maryland Child Abduction Prevention Act)**

February 9, 2023

TO: Chair Clippinger, Vice Chair Moon and members of the Judiciary Committee

The ultimate goal of this proposed legislation is to prevent international child abduction before it is too late, before parents cannot get their child back. It protects unemancipated children under the age of 18 and applies to both custodial and non-custodial parents.

I am introducing this abduction prevention bill with the hope that, as legislators, we understand the devastating consequences of child abduction on children, parents, and communities and proactively attempt to prevent it.

The Act establishes the following:

1. Parties are required to provide advance written notice to the court and/or the other party of the intent to travel outside the United States with the child
 - a. This notice is at least 90 days prior to the planned travel
2. Courts can take action based on risk factors in line with the Uniform Law Commission, National Center for Missing & Exploited Children, and American Bar Association's recommendations
 - a. These are data-backed suggestions, the court retains discretion in these cases
3. Warrants can be issued in the event of immediate child abduction risk
 - a. The state department currently has the capability to pursue emergency action, but requires court authorization
4. Reforms work retroactively to help those already impacted by child abduction

For the sake of our most vulnerable children, I urge a favorable report of House Bill 267. Thank you for your thoughtful consideration.