



February 28, 2024

**House Bill 1254- Criminal History Records Checks and Abuse and Neglect Clearances-Requirements
House Ways and Means Committee**

Position: SUPPORT

The Maryland Association of Resources for Families and Youth (MARFY) is an association of private child caring organizations providing foster care, group homes, and other services through more than 200 programs across Maryland. The members of MARFY represent providers who serve Maryland's most vulnerable children who are in out of home placements due to abuse, neglect or severe mental health, and medical needs. We operate group homes, treatment foster care programs and independent living programs, primarily serving the foster care population as well as a juvenile services population.

MARFY writes to support House Bill 1254, which mandates a comprehensive criminal history record checks and child abuse and neglect clearances for individuals seeking employment or volunteer positions involving direct contact with children in licensed childcare centers, registered family care homes, or registered large family childcare homes. This bill represents a crucial step forward in ensuring the safety and well-being of our children, and we commend Delegate Wells for introducing it.

Furthermore, the bill enforces enhanced child safety measures which is a standard for prospective employees, volunteers, or any additional adults having direct contact with children to undergo a criminal history records check. Implementing this measure will significantly mitigate the risk of endangering child welfare and ensure that only individuals with clear backgrounds are allowed to work in such sensitive positions.

Overall, House Bill 1254, is a thoughtful, necessary, and forward-looking piece of legislation. It addresses a critical need for enhanced safety measures in childcare settings, reflecting our collective responsibility to protect the most vulnerable

members of our society. **It is for these reasons we politely ask for a favorable report on House Bill 1254.**

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Maryland Association of
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