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March 27, 2025

Senator William C. Smith, Jr., Chair  
Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee  
2 East Miller Senate Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

**HB1480 - Child Advocacy Centers- Continuity of Care Standards for Health Care Professionals and Reports of Violations**

**Position: Support**

Dear Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and Members of the Committee,

I am an attorney practicing in Maryland since 1972 and have been General Counsel to the Maryland Psychological Association since 1979. I am submitting this testimony on behalf of the Maryland Psychological Association.

I was present during the House hearings on this bill and heard the justification by the opposition that the Child Advocacy Centers (“CAC”) are certified by the National Children’s Alliance, that the incident that occurred which prompted this bill was unique, and therefore this legislation is unnecessary. One incident is sufficient to make us aware of the lack of oversight that exists.

National Children Alliance Member CACs are credited for 5 years. I have reviewed the documents on the National Children’s Alliance website to try to find a process by which a complaint could be filed against a CAC accredited by the National Children’s Alliance. I reviewed the books on their “Standards” and their membership guidebooks and was unable to find any reference to complaints or a process for filing one.

The oversight of these facilities by the Department of Health is critical to protect the mental health of children who are being treated by CAC mental health providers, whether employed or privately contracted. The negative impact of the sudden loss of a mental health provider can be overwhelming to children who have established trust and reliance on their therapist. This bill simply provides a process to be followed in those instances, requires CACs to provide information to the Department of Health and appropriate oversight of CAC’s to assure they are providing for the ethical transition of children’s treatment, which is an obligation of every therapist. Without this oversight, and a mechanism for assuring the proper transfer of treatment and notice to parents, this

unfortunate incident described by the other witnesses can reoccur. The mental health of our children receiving services from a CAC deserve to be assured of continuity of care. I therefore urge the favorable report of HB1480.

Thank you.

Very truly yours,

*Richard Bloch*

Richard Bloch

cc: David Goode-Cross, Ph.D.MPA President  
Stephanie Wolf, JD, Ph.D., Chair, MPA Legislative Committee  
Barbara Brocato & Dan Shattuck, MPA Government Affairs