



**National  
Children's  
Alliance®**

*The Force Behind  
Children's Advocacy Centers*

**March 28, 2025**

The Honorable William C. Smith Jr., Chair; and  
Members of the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee  
2 East, Miller Senate Office Building  
Annapolis, MD 21401

**Re: HB 1480 – Opposition**

Dear Chairman Smith and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of the National Children's Alliance (NCA), our 959 member Children's Advocacy Centers (CACs) across the United States, and the more than 370,000 children we serve annually who are impacted by abuse and sex trafficking, we respectfully urge your opposition to HB 1480. While we believe all parties share a genuine commitment to children's well-being, after careful evaluation, we find the proposed legislation unnecessary and duplicative to existing efforts to address the effective and ethical delivery of mental health services to children who have experienced trauma..

NCA is the nationally recognized accrediting body for Children's Advocacy Centers. Maryland law mandates the statewide establishment of CACs to ensure that all children have access to the highest quality services in response to allegations of child sexual abuse. To maintain these standards, Maryland statute requires that CACs meet or exceed the rigorous accreditation criteria set by NCA, which are updated every five years to reflect the latest research, evidence, and best practices. These standards are developed by over 130 child abuse intervention professionals, including members of the American Psychological Association, who rely on the most current data and research.

Continuity of care is a top priority for all CACs. For this reason, NCA's accreditation standards require that therapists be licensed or work under the supervision of a

licensed professional while pursuing licensure themselves. This ensures that therapists adhere to the ethical guidelines set by the American Psychological Association and other relevant professional codes, which require therapists to responsibly transition clients when they can no longer provide services. Furthermore, established procedures, including the filing of a complaint with the Maryland Board of Examiners of Psychologists, are already in place to ensure that should a therapist fail to transition a client appropriately, the matter can be addressed through censure and other disciplinary action. The Maryland Board of Examiners of Psychologists range of disciplinary actions for ethical infractions include actions up to the suspension of licensure (which effectively would terminate a therapists' ability to practice in most settings, including children's advocacy centers.)

While we appreciate the intent of the proponents of HB 1480, we believe the issues it raises are already addressed by current statutes and professional practices, and that the proposed legislation would do more harm than good to the statewide network of CACs. Moreover, the importance of continuity of care will be further reinforced by a set of statewide requirements currently being finalized by the Maryland Children's Alliance (MCA), the statutory organization best equipped to address the unique challenges of Maryland's diverse CACs.

The heart of the CAC model is collaboration, and we remain fully committed to collaborating with you and other stakeholders to improve outcomes for children. However, given the reasons outlined above, we respectfully request that you issue an unfavorable report on HB 1480.

Thank you again for your consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'T. Huizar', with a horizontal line extending to the right.

Teresa Huizar, CEO  
National Children's Alliance