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Federal ID# 26-0177198

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Children's Resource Intervention Center – Kids Empowerment Team

January 21, 2025

RE: HB 152/SB 25 – Family Law – Child Custody Evaluators –
Qualifications

Position: FAVORABLE

To the members of the House Judiciary and Senate Judicial Proceedings
Committees:

The CRICKET Center, Worcester County's Child Advocacy Center, strongly supports HB 152/SB 25 – Family Law – Child Custody Evaluators – Qualifications and asks for a swift and favorable report on this important child protection legislation.

HB 152/SB 25 would help ensure the safety and well-being of children involved in child custody court proceedings involving child abuse or domestic violence. This priority child safety legislation would require that child custody evaluators have basic qualifications and receive basic training before being appointed or approved by a court to perform a custody evaluation in those child custody cases involving domestic violence or child abuse.

As an organization dedicated to protecting and advocating for children impacted by abuse, we understand the importance of ensuring that child custody proceedings prioritize the safety and well-being of vulnerable children. Through our work with children and families in Worcester County, we have seen firsthand the devastating consequences that can arise when custody decisions are made without proper understanding of the dynamics of domestic violence and child abuse.

HB 152/SB 25 addresses a significant gap in the current system by requiring child custody evaluators to meet basic qualifications and undergo essential training before being appointed or approved by the court. These measures are crucial in ensuring that evaluators possess the necessary expertise to accurately assess the complexities of cases involving domestic violence and child abuse.

The decisions made in child custody cases can have lifelong implications for children and their families. Without adequately trained and qualified evaluators, there is a heightened risk of misjudgments or decisions that could jeopardize a child's safety.

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This legislation is a vital step toward safeguarding children by ensuring that professionals involved in these critical decisions are prepared to handle the unique challenges of such cases.

Putting in statute that Maryland's child custody evaluators will be qualified and trained will help protect children in these most sensitive and potentially dangerous child custody cases involving allegations of child abuse and domestic violence.

I urge you to support HB 152/SB 25. Thank you for your time and attention to this vital issue.

Sincerely,



Lauren Cooper
Executive Director
The CRICKET Center