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**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 1191/SB0548**  
**FAMILY LAW - CHILD CUSTODY – DETERMINATIONS**

HB1191 and the cross-filed SB0548 are the product resulting from the grueling studies and analysis commissioned by the Maryland General Assembly over a decade ago. Though various amended and modified forms of HB1191 were tenaciously sought by former Delegate Dumais, now a Circuit Court judge in Montgomery County, it was her deeply held belief that this proposed legislation would one day become the reality that would bring about a confluence of case law and statute, thus simplifying an already daunting task for many pro se litigants and the overly burdened court system. HB1191 is the overwhelmingly supported amalgamation of case law and statute.

HB1191 codifies the factors a circuit court judge must consider in making a determination in a child custody case in Maryland. By so doing, its passing puts in one place, the Maryland Annotated Code, that which a layperson needs to know in a child custody case.

The more than 15 factors the Courts are to consider in a child custody determination are included within HB1191. These factors are derived from multiple Maryland common law determinations, outlined, and set forth by the Court in such cases as *Montgomery County v. Sanders*, 38 Md. App. 406, (1977) and *Taylor v. Taylor*, 306 Md. 290 (1986).

More importantly, the bill sets forth that the Court must articulate its findings of as to each factor on the record to assure that all the factors are considered. This is a nod to a landmark case: Domingues v. Johnson, 323 Md. 486, 1991.

HB1191 garners the support of such groups as the Maryland State Bar Association Family Law Section and the Maryland Judicial Conference. The cross file, SB0548, has already passed through the Senate with a unanimous vote. Similarly, HB848, this same bill as introduced in 2024, passed through the House with a unanimous vote. Let us make 2025 the year that House Bill 1191 becomes statutory law.

HB1191 is a no brainer when it comes to family law and the best interest of the child.

**PLEASE ENTER A FAVORABLE REPORT FOR HB1191  
and as Cross-Filed: SB0548**

*Susan T. McGowan*