



**DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES**

*Wes Moore, Governor · Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor · Rafael López, secretary*

February 20, 2025

The Honorable Luke Clippinger, Chair  
House Judiciary Committee  
100 Taylor House Office Building  
6 Bladen Street  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

**RE: TESTIMONY ON HB1209 - CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT - REPORTS AND RECORDS - DISCLOSURE - POSITION: INFORMATIONAL ONLY**

Dear Chair Clippinger and members of the Judiciary Committee:

The Maryland Department of Human Services (DHS) thanks the Committee for its consideration and is respectfully providing a letter of information for House Bill 1209 (HB 1209).

With a presence in every jurisdiction, the Department of Human Services (DHS) connects Marylanders with vital resources, including preventative and supportive services, economic assistance, and pathways to employment and career advancement. HB 1209 impacts our Social Services Administration (SSA) and its implementation of the Child Protective Services program.

HB 1209 aligns well with our goal to prioritize transparency, honesty, and openness. The bill establishes a process for the public to request and potentially receive Child Abuse and Neglect reports and records. By facilitating access to this information, HB 1209 demonstrates the Administration's commitment to increasing transparency and openness.

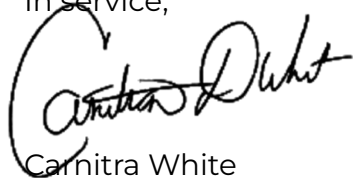
HB 1209 proposes a framework for requesting child abuse and neglect reports and records from DHS, with a specific focus on cases involving the fatality or near fatality of children who were under DHS care during a critical incident. Upon receiving a request, DHS will promptly inform the local jurisdiction's State's Attorney's Office (SAO) of the request. The local SAO then has 30 days to review the records, redact

sensitive information, and determine if the case record is suitable for sharing, taking into consideration any ongoing criminal investigations or prosecutions.

HB 1209 aims to further strengthen the Department's transparency by establishing a clear process for requesting and potentially obtaining relevant reports and records. This enhanced level of openness supports the Department's goals of transparency and building trust with the community.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide a letter of information to the Committee for consideration during your deliberations. If you require additional information, please contact Rachel Sledge, Director of Government Affairs, at [rachel.sledge@maryland.gov](mailto:rachel.sledge@maryland.gov).

In service,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Carnitra White". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Carnitra White  
Principal Deputy Secretary