

HJ0004: Social Services Administration - Accountability - Protecting Maryland's Most Vulnerable: Please vote to **SUPPORT** this bill **WITH AMENDMENTS**.

Dear Rules & Executive Nominations Committee:

I am writing to strongly urge you to **SUPPORT HJ 0004** during committee consideration or floor votes, **with a targeted amendment to strengthen its language, as detailed below.**

The SSA plays a critical role in safeguarding our most vulnerable children in guardianship homes and under SSA care, yet repeated reports of preventable harm show the need for urgent reform. I fully support the resolution's goals: Maryland's most vulnerable residents—particularly **children in the child welfare system—deserve a system that prioritizes their safety, provides timely intervention, and holds agencies accountable when failures occur.** Too many heartbreaking cases have exposed systemic shortcomings in SSA operations, including high caseloads, inadequate training, poor data transparency, and insufficient oversight. This resolution is a necessary step to demand better performance, restore public trust, and ensure that every vulnerable child in SSA care receives the protection they deserve.

To make the resolution more effective and directive, **I respectfully request an amendment to change the language on page 2, line 24** from "implores" the General Assembly to **"requires" or "directs"** the General Assembly to take the actions listed in the bill. The current wording is advisory and non-binding; **using stronger, imperative language would send a clearer message that the General Assembly prioritizes and calls to enact reforms to protect Maryland's vulnerable children in the child welfare system through stronger oversight, resources, and reforms.**

With this amendment, HJ 0004 would become a more compelling call for accountability and concrete legislative action for these vulnerable children. I urge you to support the resolution and adopt the proposed language change to ensure it carries the weight needed to drive real change.

For these reasons, I respectfully ask you to **vote in favor of HJ 0004, amended to use "requires" or "directs" on page 2, line 24,** and help strengthen protections for Maryland's vulnerable children under the care of the SSA.

Thank you for your attention to this urgent child welfare and public accountability issue.

Sincerely,

Trudy Tibbals

