

MIKE MCKAY
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Garrett, Allegany, and Washington Counties



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Joint Committees
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Program Open Space and Agricultural
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Senate Bill 744 – Criminal Law - Interference of Custody Orders - Penalties

March 3, 2026

Dear Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and Members of the Committee,

I am writing to express strong support for Senate Bill 744, *Criminal Law – Interference of Custody Orders – Penalties*. This legislation addresses a critical gap in Maryland law by establishing clear consequences for individuals who knowingly and willfully interfere with court-ordered custody arrangements. By prohibiting actions such as enticing or withholding a minor from their lawful custodian, court-appointed guardian, or a person standing in loco parentis, SB 744 reinforces the authority of custody orders and prioritizes the stability and safety of children. The bill’s graduated penalty structure—beginning with a written warning and escalating to civil fines and misdemeanor charges for repeat offenses—strikes an appropriate balance between deterrence and fairness.

This measure is essential to protecting families and upholding the integrity of judicial decisions. Interference with custody orders can cause significant emotional harm to children and undermine the rule of law. SB 744 provides law enforcement with a clear framework for addressing violations while ensuring due process for those involved. By enacting this legislation, Maryland will strengthen its commitment to safeguarding children and supporting custodial arrangements that serve their best interests.

I thank you for your time and I urge a favorable report.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. W. McKay".

Senator Mike McKay
Representing the Appalachia Region of Maryland
Serving Garrett, Allegany, and Washington Counties