



LEGISLATIVE BLACK CAUCUS OF MARYLAND, INC.

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Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

The Legislative Black Caucus of Maryland offers its strong and favorable support for House Bill 890/SB650 (HB890) – "Know Before They Knock" Family Right to Notice Act. This bill ensures that parents and caretakers are informed of their legal rights during child abuse and neglect investigations. Under **HB890/SB650**, local departments of social services and law enforcement agencies must provide oral and written notice at the initial point of contact, affirming that families are not required to allow entry into their homes, speak without legal counsel, or comply with unwarranted requests. Additionally, the bill mandates that any evidence obtained in violation of these rights be excluded from judicial and administrative proceedings, reinforcing due process protections.

The child welfare system disproportionately impacts Black families. Studies indicate that by the age of 18, 53% of all Black children nationwide will be subjected to a child welfare investigation, a rate far exceeding that of white children. These investigations can have lasting consequences, often leading to unwarranted family separations, emotional trauma, and systemic mistrust. Black and brown families are more likely to be over-surveilled and over-policed by child protective services, even when evidence of actual neglect or abuse is no greater than in white families. This bill provides essential safeguards to prevent unnecessary government intrusion and protects Black Marylanders from further systemic injustices.

The disparities in child welfare investigations have real consequences for Black Marylanders. The fear of unjust scrutiny discourages many families from seeking resources or medical care for their children, further exacerbating inequities. Ensuring that parents and caretakers are fully informed of their rights prevents coercion and strengthens community trust in social services. Moreover, by mandating that any evidence obtained unlawfully is inadmissible, **HB890/SB650** upholds constitutional protections and reduces the risk of wrongful child removals, which disproportionately harm Black families.

By protecting Black families from undue government intervention and ensuring transparency in the child welfare system, **HB890/SB650** upholds the state's commitment to racial justice and equity. This bill aligns with the Legislative Black Caucus of Maryland's mission to advocate for policies that dismantle

systemic inequities and empower Black communities. We urge the Maryland General Assembly to pass **HB890/SB650** and stand with us in ensuring fairness, dignity, and justice for all Maryland families.

For these reasons, the Legislative Black Caucus of Maryland strongly supports **HB890/SB650**.

Legislative Black Caucus of Maryland