



Maryland Chiefs of Police Association

Maryland Sheriffs' Association



MEMORANDUM

TO: The Honorable William C. Smith, Jr., Chair and
Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee

FROM: Darren Popkin, Executive Director, MCPA-MSA Joint Legislative Committee
Andrea Mansfield, Representative, MCPA-MSA Joint Legislative Committee
Samira Jackson, Representative, MCPA-MSA Joint Legislative Committee

DATE: February 26, 2026

RE: **SB 650 - Family Law - Child Abuse and Neglect Investigations ("Know Before They Knock" Family Right to Notice Act)**

POSITION: **OPPOSE**

The Maryland Chiefs of Police Association (MCPA) and the Maryland Sheriffs' Association (MSA) **OPPOSE SB 650**. This bill requires a local department of social services or a law enforcement agency to provide oral and written notice of certain rights to a parent or caretaker of a child at the time of initial contact during an investigation of suspected child abuse or neglect

This bill imposes excessive procedural requirements on law enforcement officers and child protective services during investigations of suspected child abuse and neglect. By mandating written and oral notices at the time of initial contact, the bill creates unnecessary delays that hinder our ability to swiftly assess the safety of at-risk children. The extensive notification process also gives potential abusers the opportunity to evade questioning or manipulate circumstances before a proper evaluation can be conducted, potentially endangering children in immediate danger.

Furthermore, the bill's exclusionary rule, which prohibits the use of evidence obtained in violation of the notification requirement, significantly weakens our ability to prosecute child abuse cases. Law enforcement officers must often act swiftly based on limited information to ensure a child's safety, and the proposed restrictions on obtaining statements or conducting interviews without prior notice will obstruct these urgent efforts. The bill effectively ties the hands of investigators, forcing them to navigate bureaucratic obstacles rather than focusing on the welfare of vulnerable children. The added requirement that parents or caretakers be informed of their rights before questioning further complicates immediate intervention and could lead to lost opportunities to remove children from harmful environments.

Finally, this bill places an undue administrative burden on law enforcement agencies, diverting critical resources away from frontline investigative efforts. Requiring officers to provide written and signed documentation at every stage of interaction reduces efficiency and adds unnecessary legal complexities to child protection cases. Our primary duty is to safeguard children from abuse and neglect, and this bill

532 Baltimore Boulevard, Suite 308
Westminster, Maryland 21157
667-314-3216 / 667-314-3236

obstructs that mission by prioritizing procedural formalities over child safety. We urge this committee to reject this bill and instead work toward policies that enhance, rather than impede, the ability of law enforcement and child protective services to act decisively in the best interests of at-risk children. For these reasons, MCPA and MSA **OPPOSE SB 650** and urge an **UNFAVORABLE** committee report.