



**SB481/ HB481**  
**Family Law - Denial or Interference With**  
**Visitation Rights**  
**FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS**

To the Honorable Senators of the JPR and House Judiciary Committees:

SB481/HB481 is a simple and straightforward path to ensure that children enjoy visitation with their parents that have already been ordered by the court. It fosters cooperation with court ordered visitation, discourages false allegations, and provides a mechanism for lost visitation to be compensated for. It is for good reason that this bill has been passed in other states and is being considered in many other states.

Some reservations have been expressed that this law could interfere with the best interest of the child standard. However, we do not see this as an issue. The bill specifically addresses this by stating that:

In any custody or visitation proceeding, if the court determines that a party to a custody or visitation order has unjustifiably denied or interfered with visitation granted by a custody or visitation order, the court, **IN A MANNER CONSISTENT WITH THE BEST INTERESTS OF THE CHILD:**

If visitation was withheld due to the genuine best interest of the child, the bill's provisions would not be applicable.

There are two amendments that we feel would strengthen this bill. First, the time back is required to be paid back within two years. Two years is a very long time. Such a long period diminishes the deterrent effect of the bill and it also potentially makes the child wait a long time to get back the visitation. While we understand that it could take two years to pay back a certain holiday, this timeframe could also be manipulated to push off the time back for ordinary days. We would like to see a much shorter time period stipulated for the payback of general visitation, with an allowance of up to two years for holidays.

Second, MD family courts have one of the longest wait periods for a hearing in the country. Once a motion is made to act upon this law, it could take a long time until the court rules upon the visitation payback. This again diminishes the deterrent effect. The bill would be much more powerful if it required the courts to quickly rule on the issue within a short period of time after the motion is filed.

We do support this bill as is, but we also encourage that our amendments be taken into consideration to further strengthen it and to expedite the process. We urge a favorable vote on this bill and request that our amendments also be added to the bill.

Yours,

Yaakov Aichenbaum

Professional Alliance for Child Centered Safety (PACCS), Founding Member of the Board of Directors

<https://www.paccs.global/about-paccs>

yaakov@ybm.edu

6211 Park Heights Avenue

Baltimore, MD 21215