



April 4, 2026

Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

House Bill 1383 — Children in Need of Assistance - Permanency Plan Requirements

Position: Support

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

On behalf of the Maryland Association of Resources for Families and Youth (MARFY), we respectfully submit this testimony in support of House Bill 1383.

MARFY represents licensed private child-placing agencies and community-based providers across Maryland that serve children and youth who have experienced abuse, neglect, trauma, and instability. Our members operate foster care, treatment foster care, group home, and independent living programs — all with the shared mission of ensuring that children in out-of-home placement achieve safe, stable, and permanent family connections.

House Bill 1383 strengthens Maryland’s child welfare system by enhancing and clarifying requirements for *permanency planning* for children in need of assistance. Specifically, the bill ensures that permanency plans include certain key documents including a certified disposition of abandonment, parental rights termination orders, and documented notices of intent that are critical for moving children toward permanent family outcomes.

Permanency is a foundational component of child-centered care. When children have stable, lasting family connections through reunification, adoption, or guardianship, they are far more likely to experience positive outcomes across their lifetimes including improved educational attainment, enhanced emotional and behavioral health, and reduced risk of system involvement later in life. A strong permanency framework is not just a case-management task it is a life-changing milestone that defines how a young person experiences family, belonging, and opportunity.

However, achieving permanency is only possible when planning documents are complete, accurate, and accessible. In practice, missing or delayed documentation can stall progress toward permanency, prolonging uncertainty and instability for youth who have already experienced traumatic loss and multiple placements. HB 1383 addresses this challenge by requiring permanency plans to include, when applicable and available, the necessary legal documents that allow permanency caregivers and courts to move forward with certainty.



By standardizing these requirements, the bill helps ensure that:

- Children are not kept in care longer than necessary due to administrative gaps;
- Courts and caregivers have the documentation they need to make timely permanency decisions;
- Providers can advocate confidently for the best interests of the child; and
- Youth have a faster, clearer path toward permanent family connections.

Youth exiting foster care without permanency face disproportionate risk of homelessness, unemployment, behavioral health challenges, and long-term dependency on social services. Ensuring that the administrative and legal prerequisites of permanency — such as termination of parental rights and abandonment findings — are clearly reflected in planning documents helps reduce delays, minimizes placement disruptions, and affirms Maryland’s commitment to placing children in safe, loving families as early as possible.

House Bill 1383 represents a thoughtful, common-sense improvement to the State’s permanency planning process that promotes efficiency, equity, and positive outcomes for children in care. By requiring relevant legal documentation to be integrated into permanency planning, this bill helps eliminate barriers that too often impede progress, reinforces a child-centered approach, and supports Maryland’s goals of stability and lifelong family connections for youth in need.

For these reasons, MARFY respectfully urges a favorable report on House Bill 1383. Thank you for your consideration.

For more information call or email:

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