



## **TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SENATE BILL 548**

### **Family Law - Child Support - Determination of Custody and Agreements Between Parents**

TO: Hon. William Smith, Chair, and Members of the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

FROM: Zachary Alberts, Director of Advocacy and Strategic Initiatives at the Center for Urban Families

DATE: February 16th, 2026

Good afternoon, my name is Zachary Alberts. I am the Director of Advocacy and Strategic Initiatives at the Center for Urban Families, a workforce and family strengthening program in Baltimore City. The Center for Urban Families requests a favorable report on SB 548, Determination of Custody and Agreements Between Parents, which would allow parents, not the government, to decide whether, and how much, child support is appropriate.

Co-parenting outside of a romantic relationship does not have to be a contentious process. The Center for Urban Families has been running our Baltimore Responsible Fatherhood Services program for almost three decades. Our clients, who are often non-custodial parents, discuss the myriad of ways they support their co-parents; whether it is through school drop offs and pick ups, providing basic necessities, or often giving cash directly, our parents report that the formal child support system is not able to adequately capture all the ways parents show up for their children.

This issue is particularly acute for lower-income parents, whose access to disposable income is not as consistent as the child support establishment process through the courts demands. Custodial parents know when their co-parent is doing everything they can to support their children, but external factors are interfering. The courts and the Child Support Administration do not have that flexibility.

Maryland should allow parents to decide what kind of financial arrangement is best conducive to a happy, healthy childhood for their children, instead of interfering in a relationship they would otherwise have no business being in.

We urge a favorable report.

**For more information, contact:**

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