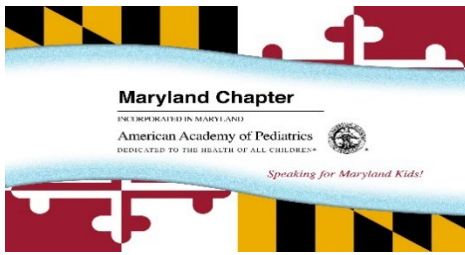


# **HB1383 - Senate\_FAV\_MDAAP\_Children Need Assisstanc**

Uploaded by: Christine Krone

Position: FAV



Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

April 2, 2026

House Bill 1383 – *Children in Need of Assistance – Permanency Plan Requirements*

**POSITION: SUPPORT**

The Maryland Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics (MDAAP) is a statewide association representing more than 1,100 pediatricians and allied pediatric and adolescent healthcare practitioners in the State and is a strong and established advocate promoting the health and safety of all the children we serve. On behalf of MDAAP, we submit this letter of **support** for House Bill 1383.

This legislation signifies meaningful reform toward ensuring that children involved in Maryland's child welfare system are not left in prolonged uncertainty, but instead achieve the safe, stable, and permanent homes that are essential to their health and development.

From a pediatric perspective, permanency is a medical and developmental necessity. Children require consistent, nurturing relationships with caregivers to support healthy brain development, emotional regulation, and long-term physical health. When children experience instability or extended time in foster care without a clear path to permanency, the consequences are profound and well-documented: increased rates of toxic stress, developmental delays, behavioral health conditions, and chronic disease later in life.

House Bill 1383 appropriately centers the best interests of the child by strengthening how permanency decisions are made. It recognizes that delays in achieving permanency are harmful. This bill helps ensure that court determinations more clearly prioritize timely permanency and do not allow children to remain in temporary placements without a defined and appropriate long-term plan.

Children in the child welfare system already face disproportionately high rates of medical complexity, trauma exposure, and unmet behavioral health needs. For these children, stability is the foundation upon which all effective care depends. A permanent home provides continuity in medical care, consistency in relationships, and the secure environment necessary for healing and growth.

For these reasons, the MDAAP urges a favorable report on House Bill 1383. Ensuring that children achieve permanency without unnecessary delay is essential to protecting their health, development, and future.

**For more information call:**

Christine K. Krone

J. Steven Wise

Danna L. Kauffman

Andrew G. Vetter

410-244-7000

# **HB1383 CPMC FAV JPR.pdf**

Uploaded by: Diana Philip

Position: FAV

## THE COALITION TO PROTECT MARYLAND'S CHILDREN

*Our Mission: To combine and amplify the power of organizations and citizens working together to keep children safe from abuse and neglect. We strive to secure budgetary and public policy resources to make meaningful and measurable improvements in safety, permanence, and wellbeing.*



CPMC  
COALITION TO PROTECT  
MARYLAND'S CHILDREN

### **HB1383 - Children in Need of Assistance - Permanency Plan Requirements**

**Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee**

**April 2, 2026**

**Position: SUPPORT**

The Coalition to Protect Maryland's Children is a consortium of organizations and individuals formed in 1992 who are concerned about the care of Maryland's most vulnerable children and work together to educate and promote meaningful child welfare reform. **CPMC urges a favorable report on HB1383 - Children in Need of Assistance - Permanency Plan Requirements.**

Maryland's law requires courts during Children in Need of Assistance (CINA) permanency and review hearings to find whether the local department of social services has made "reasonable efforts" to finalize preparation plans for a youth aging out of foster care and whether the youth's individualized needs will be met through implementation of those plans. Current statute lists those needs only in broad categories (health, education, safety, and preparation for independence). Concerns have been raised that not enough attention or resources are devoted to this process across all jurisdictions, leaving too many youth aging out of care at risk of economic, housing, and/or health instability after they exiting foster care.

Although federal law requires judicial findings on reasonable efforts in CINA cases, it is left to the states to define what these actually are. HB1383 establishes categories to be used as thresholds in determining the status of efforts being made towards a youth's successful transition into self-sufficiency and adulthood as well as encouraging the timeliness of implementation. These include:

- Health, medical, and dental needs;
- Education needs and education plan, including timely enrolment in educational programs and efforts to share information about postsecondary education and vocational programs;
- Addressing any ongoing safety concerns of the youth;
- Emotional stability and timeliness of therapeutic referrals or services provided to the youth;
- the stability and appropriateness of the youth's housing after the case is terminated;
- socialization needs, including enrollment in extracurricular activities or programs; and
- financial needs and literacy to ensure self-sufficiency.

The bill also calls for youth to have access to all necessary documents, such as one's birth certificate, social security card, passport, driver's license, and/or state-issued identification card.

HB 1383 provides clarity to this process and will better serve the needs of foster youth aging out of Maryland's system. It encourages due diligence of both the local departments as well as the judiciary in assisting these youth in not only meeting their basic needs, but successfully entering adulthood and thriving. It is for these reasons that the Coalition to Protect Maryland's Children **urges a favorable report on HB1383 - Children in Need of Assistance - Permanency Plan Requirements.**<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Members of CPMC represented by this written testimony include – American Academy of Pediatrics - MD Chapter, Center for Hope, Child Justice, Citizen's Review Board for Children, Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA - Baltimore County), Everstand, Maryland Association of Resources for Families and Youth (MARFY), Maryland Children's Alliance, Maryland Legal Aid, Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence, the State Council on Child Abuse & Neglect (SCCAN), and individual members of the coalition.

# **HB1383- Maryland Legal Aid - FAV260402 Written Tes**

Uploaded by: Erica LeMon

Position: FAV



## **HB1383 - Children in Need of Assistance - Permanency Plan Requirements**

**April 2, 2026**

**Position: FAVORABLE**

*Maryland Legal Aid submits written testimony on HB1383 at the request of its sponsor, Delegate Michele Guyton.*

Maryland Legal Aid asks that the Committee report **favorably** on HB1383, which provides much-needed structure and clarity to the “reasonable efforts” Department must make to meet the needs of children in foster care. Maryland Legal Aid serves residents in each of Maryland’s 24 jurisdictions, providing free legal services to the State’s low-income and vulnerable residents in a range of civil legal matters. Maryland Legal Aid is Maryland’s largest civil non-profit law firm, representing vulnerable young people in Child in Need of Assistance (CINA) matters across the State. This legislation is a critical measure to strengthen stability, enhance outcomes, and ensure timely permanency.

Maryland Legal Aid’s staff represent thousands of children in CINA and Guardianship (“TPR”) proceedings throughout the state. Our attorneys represent children from infancy to young adulthood. As a result of its extensive work in the field, Maryland Legal Aid has expertise in matters concerning child welfare, children in foster care, and particularly, youth who are aging out of foster care.

Under current law, if removal from a child’s home is necessary, the State must provide “custody, care, and discipline as nearly as possible equivalent to that which the child’s parents should have given.”<sup>1</sup> The CINA statute further provides that the Department must demonstrate that it has met the child’s needs—including health, education, safety, and preparation for independence, in order for the court to find that “reasonable efforts” have been made.<sup>2</sup> The bill’s targeted amendments clarify that the Department’s “reasonable efforts” must address a child’s individualized needs with timely action across the domains of health, education, safety, emotional safety and therapeutic services, placement stability, housing, extracurricular and socialization supports, financial awareness, vital identity documents, and preparation for independence. These amendments fill a critical gap in Maryland law.

Both federal and Maryland statutes require judicial findings on “reasonable efforts” in CINA cases, yet they do not define the term with essential specificity.<sup>3</sup> Under the Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA), states must ensure that “reasonable efforts” are made first to prevent removal, then to reunify the child with their parents, and then to finalize a permanency plan if reunification is

---

<sup>1</sup> Md. Code Ann., Cts. & Jud. Proc. § 3-802(a)(6).

<sup>2</sup> Md. Code Ann., Cts. & Jud. Proc. § 3-816.1 (b)(2)(ii) (2026).

<sup>3</sup> *In re James G.*, 178 Md.App. 543, 578, (2008) (“reasonable efforts” remains undefined under federal law).

inconsistent with that plan.<sup>4</sup> Reasonable efforts must center the child’s health and safety as the paramount concern.<sup>5</sup> But ASFA leaves the particulars of those efforts largely to states. This absence of guidance is ripe for producing uneven expectations and outcomes for youth. HB 1383 supplies the needed detail.

Maryland’s current statute requires courts at permanency and review hearings to find whether the local department made reasonable efforts to finalize the permanency plan and meet the child’s needs, but the statute lists those needs only in broad categories (health, education, safety, preparation for independence).<sup>6</sup> HB 1383 refines those categories into concrete, reviewable elements, including timely enrollment in school; postsecondary/vocational awareness; prompt therapeutic referrals; placement stability and post-case housing planning; extracurricular engagement; financial literacy; ensuring vital documents; and more, so that agencies and courts have clear, actionable benchmarks.

The bill aligns with Maryland case law and improves accountability. Maryland courts have repeatedly emphasized that the best interests of the child govern CINA and permanency decisions, while requiring that agencies demonstrate specific, case-tailored efforts. In the case of *In re Shirley B.*, the appellate courts recognized that “reasonable efforts” are evaluated in context, including resource constraints, but still demanded evidence of sustained, individualized work toward reunification and permanency.<sup>7</sup> HB 1383 provides a consistent checklist against which those efforts can be measured without altering the contextual standard.

HB 1383 replaces the current, generalized reference to “health, education, safety, and preparation for independence” with an individualized list and explicit timeliness requirements. This converts an abstract duty into a workable standard for agency practice, court review, and appellate oversight, without changing the overarching statutory best-interest framework.<sup>8</sup>

This bill will improve outcomes for foster youth. Courts will have a record to review, rather than assumptions. For example, explicitly requiring timely school enrollment and postsecondary/vocational information addresses known points of loss during placement changes. Ensuring prompt therapeutic referrals will reduce delays that too often exacerbate trauma symptoms and placement instability. Requiring attention to placement appropriateness and post-case housing mirrors ASFA’s mandate to finalize the permanency plan in a timely way and supports smoother transitions to independence. Ensuring young people possess their birth

---

<sup>4</sup> 42 U.S.C. § 671(a)(15).

<sup>5</sup> *Id.*

<sup>6</sup> Md. Code Ann., Cts. & Jud. Proc. § 3-816.1 (2026).

<sup>7</sup> *In re Shirley B.*, 191 Md. App. 678, (2010); aff’d 419 Md. 1, (2011) (providing a detailed history and explanation of reasonable efforts).

<sup>8</sup> Md. Code Ann., Cts. & Jud. Proc. § 3-823 (2024).

certificates, Social Security cards, IDs, driver's licenses, passports, and financial literacy before case closure eliminates barriers to employment, housing, and higher education.

HB 1383 does not expand litigation or add new bureaucratic hoops; it clarifies expectations and ensures that "reasonable efforts" are measurable, child-specific, and timely. That clarity will improve practice, sharpen judicial review, and most importantly, better serve children in foster care who cannot afford delays without limiting judicial discretion.

Maryland Legal Aid urges the Committee to issue a FAVORABLE report on House Bill 1383 and urge its ultimate passage. If you have any questions, please contact: Erica I. LeMon, Advocacy Director for Children's Rights at [elemon@mdlalab.org](mailto:elemon@mdlalab.org) (410) 951-7648 or (410) 935-0937.

# **Favorable - HB 1383 - Guyton - Senate.pdf**

Uploaded by: Michele Guyton

Position: FAV

MICHELE GUYTON  
*Legislative District 42B*  
Baltimore County

—  
*Vice Chair*  
Environment and Transportation  
Committee



The Maryland House of Delegates  
6 Bladen Street, Room 251  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401  
410-841-3793  
800-492-7122 Ext. 3793  
Michele.Guyton@house.maryland.gov

THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

April 2, 2026

**Favorable – HB 1383**  
**Children in Need of Assistance – Permanency Plan Requirements**

Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee,

I respectfully ask for your consideration of HB 1383, Children in Need of Assistance, Permanency Plan Requirements. Children in foster care are not all the same, and their futures should not be shaped by a one size fits all system. HB 1383 helps ensure that permanency planning focuses on the unique needs of every individual child. Review hearings would be required to evaluate determinants of success such as health, education, safety, emotional support, and stability so that outcomes, not just timelines, define success. HB 1383 helps ensure that children in care are seen as individuals with unique needs, not just cases moving through a system as quickly as possible.

This bill also recognizes that foster youth in transition need real preparation for life beyond state care. It requires attention to the availability of identification documents, access to health care, stable housing plans, and support for education, training, or employment. Without these essentials, too many young people face unnecessary barriers the moment they exit care. These are the basic building blocks that help young people succeed as adults. We owe it to them to ensure they are not set up to struggle but equipped to thrive. By strengthening accountability and focusing on each child's wellbeing and future independence, HB 1383 helps ensure that Maryland's foster care system is not just managing placements, but truly supporting young people as they grow into adulthood.

Because every child in Maryland's care deserves dignity, stability, and a real opportunity for a successful future, I respectfully request a favorable report on HB 1383.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Delegate Michele Guyton".

Delegate Michele Guyton  
Vice Chair, Environment and Transportation Committee

**HB1383\_JPR\_MARFY\_FAV.pdf**

Uploaded by: Therese Hessler

Position: FAV



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.



Maryland Association of  
Resources for Families & Youth

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:**

Therese M. Hessler | 301-503-2576 | [therese@ashlargr.com](mailto:therese@ashlargr.com)

**HB1383\_DHS\_INFO (JPR).pdf**

Uploaded by: Gloria Brown-Burnett

Position: INFO



**DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES**

*Wes Moore, Governor · Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor · Stacy L. Rodgers, Acting Secretary*

April 2, 2026

The Honorable William C. Smith, Jr., Chair  
Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee  
2 East, Miller Senate Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

**RE: TESTIMONY ON HB 1383 - CHILDREN IN NEED OF ASSISTANCE - PERMANENCY PLAN REQUIREMENTS - POSITION: INFORMATION**

Dear Chair Smith and Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee:

The Maryland Department of Human Services (DHS) thanks the Committee for its consideration and respectfully submits information on House Bill 1383 (HB 1383).

With offices in every one of Maryland's jurisdictions, DHS provides preventative and supportive services, economic assistance, and meaningful connections to employment development and career opportunities to assist Marylanders in reaching their full potential. Our Social Services Administration (SSA) implements the Out-of-Home Care (OOH) program which is affected by HB 1383. HB 1383 would enhance permanency plan terms by requiring juvenile courts to make more findings about whether local departments of social services (LDSS) made reasonable efforts to meet each child's individualized needs.

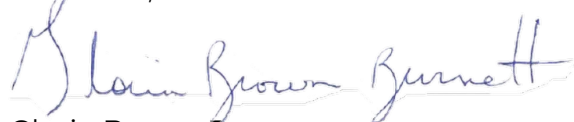
DHS supports ensuring that a child's needs are thoroughly evaluated during juvenile court proceedings, and that LDSS are held to the highest standards for the care and custody of children. However, as drafted, HB 1383 may reduce the court's effectiveness in assessing the needs of children due to new and overly prescriptive criteria. By adding such expansive and specific requirements, HB 1383 could require local departments to prioritize meeting each specific requirement at the expense of a more holistic approach to a child's needs. It could also lead to delays in service delivery and reunification by adding additional steps which might not be appropriate in every case. Additional delays could occur in permanency planning for children in out-of-home care because these requirements will put greater demand on the juvenile courts and could result in fewer cases heard each day.

As drafted, HB 1383 would create redundancies with other sections of Maryland code in a way that potentially conflicts with established and effective programs currently administered by the Department. [SSA Policy Directive 13-02](#) and federal requirements provide guidance for documenting efforts while maintaining both primary and concurrent permanency goals. Maryland's [Ready by 21 program](#) and [SSA Youth Transition Planning](#) already prepare youth for independence through a youth-driven and individualized approach. Mandating every factor enumerated by HB 1383 as required to meet a reasonable efforts standard risks limiting flexibility for caseworkers and courts to address each child's unique needs.

Existing law provides opportunities to ensure individualized reunification services are provided through zealous advocacy. [Court and Judicial Proceeding § 3-823\(e\)\(1\)\(ii\)](#) and [Family Law § 5-326\(a\)\(8\)\(vii\)](#) currently allows flexibility and considers age appropriateness in child in need of assistance (CINA) and guardianship proceedings, respectively. These subsections already require a court to determine the services needed to assist a child age 14 and older to make the successful transition from placement to adulthood. In CINA and guardianship review proceedings, all children and youth are represented by attorneys. Additionally, the child or youth may have a Court-Appointed Special Advocate (CASA). If an attorney or CASA believes that the local department has not made reasonable efforts to meet the child's individualized needs, existing law provides the means to raise any issue unique to that child's circumstance and provides the juvenile court a venue for review. [Courts and Judicial Proceedings § 3-802\(a\)](#) requires a juvenile court to ensure a child in a CINA proceeding has the programs and services consistent with the child's best interest and that their care, protection, safety, mental and physical development are provided for. [Family Law § 5-326\(q\)\(8\)\(ix\)](#) gives juvenile courts the authority to take any action that the court considers to be in the child's best interest in guardianship proceedings. Finally, [Courts and Judicial Proceedings § 3-816.4](#) already requires that a court inquire into a child's educational stability and consider a checklist of 10 factors in the child's best interest during shelter care, adjudicatory, dispositional, and change of placement hearings.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide information to the Committee for consideration during your deliberations. If you require additional information, please contact Justin Hayes, Acting Director of Government Affairs, at [justin.hayes1@maryland.gov](mailto:justin.hayes1@maryland.gov).

In service,



Gloria Brown Burnett  
Deputy Secretary for Operations