

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.



HB1398 – Public Health - Female Genital Mutilation House Judiciary Committee

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 HB1398 - Public Health - Female Genital Mutilation.**

Our coalition supports this straight forward, pro-active bill which seeks to include in Maryland's state law the definition of child abuse to include female genital mutilation. SB0907 sets out criminal penalties and civil actions against those who knowingly perform, attempt to perform, or conspire to perform the act on a minor, including transporting the child across state lines for the act to transpire.

We believe that such an act is violation of a child's right to safety, bodily integrity, health, and wellbeing. We appreciate the attention given to the importance of data collection of the criminal offenses as well as educational materials to be produced to increase public awareness of the signs of victimization, the physical and mental health risks caused by such an act, and associated criminal penalties for violations of the law.

It is for these reasons that the Coalition to Protect Maryland's Children **urges a favorable report on HB1398 - Public Health - Female Genital Mutilation.**¹

¹ Members of CPMC represented by this written testimony include – Child Justice, Center for Hope, Citizen's Review Board for Children, Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA - Baltimore County), Maryland Association of Resources for Families and Youth (MARFY), Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence, National Association of Social Workers – MD (NASW), the State Council on Child Abuse & Neglect (SCCAN), TurnAround, Inc., and individual members of the coalition.