



<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfU0l1WSdNHoXUz2uYdt4zf-ztmwuTz-rdKJ59WbJstj1Ylw/viewform>

February 26 2026

HB 1350 FWA

Family Law - Child Abuse and Neglect - Reporting

Dear Chair [J. Sandy Bartlett](#), Vice Chair [Debra Davis](#), and Members of the Judiciary Committee,

This bill establishes strengthens the procedure for reporting child abuse. The problem is that this bill retains the existing provision [§5-705\(a\)\(3\)](#) that exempts clergy from being required to report child abuse and neglect allegations whenever a religious institution self-asserts that the communication is confidential. Secular Maryland requests that this harmful reporting exemption be eliminated. The welfare of children deserves first priority. No religious practices or traditions merit, or should be granted, priority over our collective responsibility to protect Maryland's children from abuse and neglect. Maryland law has been, and will continue to be, willfully facilitating child abuse every year that the General Assembly fails to remove this reporting exemption, thereby prioritizing protecting religious institutions and their employees over the welfare of children. That is exactly what this provision is, in fact, actually accomplishing. Claims that this provision is accomplishing anything of any benefit for children or for the state of Maryland have no integrity. Get rid of the irrational, unjustifiable, and shameful provision now.

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