

**HB0890 - Family Law - Child Abuse and Neglect Investigations ("Know Before They Knock" Family Right to Notice Act)**

**House Judiciary Committee  
February 19, 2026**

**Position: OPPOSE**

**Legal Guardian Angels (LGA)** is a student organization at the University of Maryland committed to serving and advocating for vulnerable youth. LGA respectfully urges an unfavorable report on **HB0890 – Family Law – Child Abuse and Neglect Investigations (“Know Before They Knock” Family Right to Notice Act)**.

The bill seeks to clarify the rights of parents and legal guardians during initial contacts by child welfare professionals assigned to investigate child abuse or neglect claims regarding their families. While we support ensuring that parents and legal guardians understand their rights, proposed subsection (E)(1)(IV) establishes a new right for a parent or legal guardian to refuse to allow a child to be interviewed or examined unless court-ordered or required under subsection (c) or (k) of Family Law §5-706. Because of limitations placed by §5-709 allowing the parent or legal guardian the right to block an investigator to enter the residence of the child in order to make initial contact, this provision is not limited by location and appears to apply wherever the child may be whether at school, daycare, a relative’s home, extracurricular activities, or other safe environments. As written, it may be interpreted to prevent not only delayed initial contacts outside the 24-hour or 5-day statutory timeframes, but also essential follow-up interviews necessary to assess ongoing safety.

The bill also risks reframing child welfare professionals as punitive or enforcement-focused agents rather than trauma-informed practitioners working to protect children and stabilize families. If access to a child is denied, caseworkers may be forced to escalate to law enforcement under § 5-709 to gain entry. This escalation can heighten tensions, increase the likelihood of unnecessary removals, or conversely result in incomplete assessments if workers are unable to safely conduct interviews. The outcome may be both over-intervention and under-intervention—neither of which serves children’s best interests.

When the person you depend on and love is also the person causing harm it is almost impossible to reach for help. In those moments, a private conversation with a trained professional can be the difference between silence and safety. HB0890 creates additional restrictions on LDSS employees, risking delay or obstruction at the very moment a child may need protection most.

For these reasons, Legal Guardian Angels respectfully urges an unfavorable report on HB0890 - *Family Law - Child Abuse and Neglect Investigations ("Know Before They Knock" Family Right to Notice Act)*.