



February 26, 2026

House Judiciary Committee

House Bill 1258 — Child Placement Services – Advertising by Unlicensed Person – Prohibition

Position: FAVORABLE

Chair and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the Maryland Association of Resources for Families and Youth (MARFY), we respectfully submit this testimony in strong support of House Bill 1258.

MARFY represents private child placement agencies and child-serving organizations across Maryland that provide foster care, adoption, treatment foster care, and residential services to children and families. Our members operate within Maryland’s licensed and regulated child welfare framework and are deeply committed to protecting children, supporting families, and ensuring ethical and transparent adoption practices.

House Bill 1258 addresses an important gap in Maryland law by prohibiting individuals or entities from advertising adoption or child placement services unless they are licensed child placement agencies or local departments of social services. The bill also provides an enforcement pathway through notification to the Attorney General and potential civil action for violations. ([Maryland General Assembly](#))

For MARFY members, this legislation is important because it helps ensure that families seeking adoption or placement services are connected with providers who are subject to licensing standards, oversight, training requirements, and accountability. Adoption and child placement decisions are among the most significant decisions families will ever make. When unlicensed individuals or organizations advertise services that appear legitimate, families may not realize they are engaging with entities that are not regulated or accountable under Maryland law.

Establishing a clear prohibition protects both children and families while reinforcing the integrity of Maryland’s child welfare system.

This bill also matters for Marylanders more broadly. Child placement is not a typical consumer marketplace — it involves permanent legal decisions about the care and custody of children. Maryland already requires licensure for entities engaged in child placement services; House Bill 1258 simply ensures that advertising practices align with those existing requirements. The legislation promotes transparency, reduces confusion for families, and supports informed decision-making during highly sensitive life circumstances.



Maryland Association of
Resources for Families & Youth

Importantly, House Bill 1258 is a targeted and balanced policy solution. It does not restrict legitimate adoption pathways or services. Rather, it ensures that those services are promoted only by entities operating within the safeguards the State has established to protect children. National child welfare guidance recognizes that states regulate adoption advertising and intermediaries because advertising can connect parties outside regulated safeguards designed to prevent exploitation and protect vulnerable individuals. (<https://www.childwelfare.gov/resources/use-advertising-and-facilitators-adoptive-placements/>)

MARFY members work every day to recruit adoptive families, support birth families, and help children achieve safe, permanent homes. Maintaining public trust in the adoption system is essential to this work. Policies that prevent deceptive or unregulated advertising strengthen confidence in the system and ultimately benefit children waiting for permanent families. House Bill 1258 represents a commonsense step to protect families, strengthen oversight, and ensure that adoption services in Maryland remain grounded in accountability and child safety.

For these reasons, MARFY respectfully urges the Committee to issue a favorable report on House Bill 1258. Thank you for your consideration.

For more information call or email:

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