



February 26, 2026

TO: House Judiciary Committee

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

Position: SUPPORT

Chair Bartlett, Vice Chair Davis, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Linda Perilstein and I am the Executive Director of Cradle of Hope Adoption Center, a licensed MD child-placing agency for the past 30 years. I am also the parent of a son adopted in the US and a daughter adopted internationally.

House Bill 1258 addresses an important child welfare and consumer protection concern by prohibiting individuals or entities from advertising adoption or child placement services in Maryland unless they are a licensed child placement agency or a local department of social services. Adoption and child placement decisions are life-changing and permanent, and families must be able to trust that individuals or organizations offering services are operating within Maryland's regulated and accountable system.

Allowing unlicensed individuals or entities to advertise adoption services creates confusion for families and increases the risk that vulnerable parents and prospective adoptive families may be connected with intermediaries who are not subject to the same oversight, training standards, or ethical requirements as licensed providers. By establishing a clear standard that only licensed entities may advertise these services, House Bill 1258 helps protect children, families, and the integrity of Maryland's child welfare system.

This legislation also aligns Maryland with approaches used in other states that restrict adoption advertising to licensed or authorized entities to ensure accountability and transparency. Preventing deceptive or unregulated marketing practices helps ensure that adoption placements occur within systems designed to safeguard children's well-being and family stability.

We have provided homestudy services for Maryland families who chose to work with an unlicensed out of state facilitator/consultant and later reported confusion about what services were to be provided, excessive fees, poor communication, and a lack of oversight on their adoption process. We also know of situations where local birthmothers were flown out of state to facilitate the placement elsewhere.

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House Bill 1258 is a targeted and commonsense measure that strengthens consumer protection while supporting safe and ethical adoption practices. Ensuring that only licensed providers advertise child placement services helps maintain public trust and protects families during critical decision-making processes.

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

Sincerely,



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