

HON. STACY A. MAYER
CIRCUIT COURT
JUDGE
BALTIMORE COUNTY
CHAIR

HON. RICHARD SANDY
CIRCUIT COURT
JUDGE
FREDERICK COUNTY
VICE-CHAIR



KELLEY O'CONNOR
ASSISTANT STATE COURT
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P: (410) 260-1560

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MARYLAND JUDICIAL COUNCIL LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE

MEMORANDUM

TO: House Judiciary Committee
FROM: Legislative Committee
Suzanne D. Pelz, Esq.
410-260-1523
RE: House Bill 1290
Child in Need of Assistance - Proceedings - Child's Right to be Present
DATE: February 18, 2026
(2/26)
POSITION: Oppose, as drafted

The Maryland Judiciary opposes House Bill 1290, as drafted.

The Judiciary notes that the child is a party and is already vested with the right to be present at the proceedings. As such, current law may already cover the concerns the legislation is attempting to address. In addition, the court routinely makes the assessments and considerations enumerated in the bill. However, the language of the bill creates some procedural ambiguities and may cause delays in these proceedings. For example, it is unclear if this issue can be raised and decided on motion, or is a separate, in-person hearing required. If a separate hearing is required, that separate hearing would cause delays in the hearings. Further, the bill appears to assume that the child has considered judgment; it does not distinguish between a child who has considered judgment and one who does not.

cc. Hon. Jamila Woods
Judicial Council
Legislative Committee
Kelley O'Connor