

HB0592_RichardKaplowitz_FAV
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TESTIMONY ON HB#0592 - POSITION: FAVORABLE
Task Force to Study Forced Infant Separation From Incarcerated Individuals

TO: Chair Bartlett, Vice Chair Davis, and members of the Judiciary Committee

FROM: Richard Keith Kaplowitz

My name is Richard Kaplowitz. I am a resident of District 3, Frederick County. I am submitting this testimony in support of HB#0592, **Task Force to Study Forced Infant Separation From Incarcerated Individuals**

The Maryland Justice Project has uncovered *What Happens to Babies Born to Incarcerated Parents?*¹ It details all of the harms this practice creates for mothers and their infants.

In the State of Maryland, pregnant individuals who give birth while incarcerated are required to return to their correctional facility as soon as the individual is discharged from the hospital

1. For standard vaginal delivery, this is generally 1 to 2 days after giving birth
2. This means that most incarcerated parents have less than 48 hours with their newborns before the baby is separated and placed with an appropriate caregiver or enters the foster care system.

This bill will establish the Task Force to Study Forced Infant Separation From Incarcerated Individuals to study and make recommendations regarding methods to reduce forced infant separation in the State and facilitate bonds between postpartum incarcerated individuals and their children; and requiring the Task Force to report its findings and recommendations to the General Assembly on or before December 1, 2027.

That report will make the data available for planning specific actions and legislation to remediate the problems uncovered.

I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on HB0592.

¹ <https://www.ma4jr.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/Forced-Infancy-Act-Fact-Sheet29050.pdf>