



## TESTIMONY

### HB0923 – Family Law – Equity Courts – Care and Custody of Children (UNITE Act)

**Bill Sponsor:** Delegate Moreno

**Committee:** House Judiciary

**Organization Submitting:** Maryland Legislative Coalition

**Person Submitting:** Aileen Alex, CoChair

**Position:** FAVORABLE

I am submitting this testimony in support of **HB0923** on behalf of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. We are an association of unpaid citizen advocates—individuals and grassroots groups in every district across the state—representing and supporting more than 30,000 Marylanders.

As a new grandmother, it is heartbreaking to see any child face instability or the threat of being separated from a safe, loving home. HB0923 is a reminder that Maryland can choose a path rooted in compassion, fairness, and the protection of all vulnerable children within our borders.

This legislation ensures that children in Maryland's equity courts are treated with the same dignity and legal protections regardless of their immigration status. By requiring courts to apply consistent standards and procedures in custody and guardianship proceedings, HB0923 guarantees that a child's safety and "best interests" remain the primary focus, unclouded by complex federal immigration politics.

Families appearing before Maryland courts should not be disadvantaged by their status. Every child deserves the stability of a legal guardian and the full protection of the law. HB0923 provides a uniform framework for our courts to safeguard these rights, offering certainty to families during an otherwise uncertain time.

The Maryland Legislative Coalition's work centers on equity, transparency, and justice. Ensuring that immigrant children receive the same treatment as any other child in our legal system is a direct reflection of those values.

For these reasons, we respectfully urge a **FAVORABLE** report on HB0923.