

## THE COALITION TO PROTECT MARYLAND'S CHILDREN

*Our Mission: To combine and amplify the power of organizations and citizens working together to keep children safe from abuse and neglect. We strive to secure budgetary and public policy resources to make meaningful and measurable improvements in safety, permanence, and wellbeing.*



### **HB0592 – Task Force to Study Forced Infant Separation from Incarcerated Individuals House Judiciary and Health Committees March 3, 2026**

#### **Position: SUPPORT**

The Coalition to Protect Maryland's Children is a consortium of organizations and individuals formed in 1992 who are concerned about the care of Maryland's most vulnerable children and work together to educate and promote meaningful child welfare reform. CPMC **urges a favorable report on HB0592 - Task Force to Study Forced Infant Separation from Incarcerated Individuals.**

For many years, advocates have been trying to gain the attention of legislators about the state's need to invest in building more supports for parents inside local and state incarceration facilities. The majority of returning citizens will return to their communities and homes after serving their time, and many are parents who will seek to reconnect and regain meaningful relationships with the children they have left behind. Advocates in the reproductive justice space have been also raising concerns about the outcomes of maternal and infant health, bringing to light the issue of forced infant separation.

HB0592 is presented as common sense legislation to explore and determine best practices for Maryland regarding methods to reduce forced infant separation and facilitate bonds between postpartum incarcerated individuals and their children. Our coalition believes that not only does this task force hold promise for improving maternal and health outcomes but preventing child maltreatment in allowing the bonds between maternal parent and infant to strengthen and grow throughout the lifespan of the child. We are pleased that the bill sponsor added to the task force member list from last year's bill a children's attorney and a social worker specializing in early childhood. Including these professionals will help inform efforts surrounding prevention of child maltreatment as well as legal scholarship and brain science research about stopping forced infant separation to further the child's best interests. Such professionals will fortify child safety and wellbeing as goals of the task force, countering implicit bias or discrimination surrounding the challenges experienced by systems-involved parents with infants.

It is for these reasons that the Coalition to Protect Maryland's Children **urges a favorable report on HB0592- Task Force to Study Forced Infant Separation from Incarcerated Individuals.**<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Members of CPMC represented by this written testimony include Members of CPMC represented by this written testimony include the American Academy of Pediatrics - Maryland Chapter, Arrow Child & Family Ministries, Child Justice, Center for Hope, Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA - Baltimore County), Maryland Association of Resources for Families and Youth (MARFY), National Association of Social Workers – MD (NASW), and the State Council on Child Abuse & Neglect

