

erally revising the adoption laws of the State, and relating to adoption procedure, and correcting certain wording therein.

SECTION 1. *Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Maryland, That Sections 76, 77, 78, 81, 82, 83, 84 and 91 of Article 16 of the Annotated Code of Maryland (1951 Edition and 1954 Supplement), title "Chancery", sub-title "Adoption", be and they are hereby repealed and re-enacted, with amendments, and that new Section 80A be and it is hereby added to said Article and sub-title, to follow immediately after Section 80 thereof, all to read as follows:*

ADOPTION

76. (Legislative Policy.) The General Assembly hereby declares its conviction that the policies and procedures for adoption contained in this sub-title are socially necessary and desirable, having as their purpose the three-fold protection of (1) the adoptive child, from unnecessary separation from his natural parents and from adoption by person unfit to have such responsibility, *and, (EXCEPT IN ALLEGANY, GARRETT AND WASHINGTON COUNTIES), whenever possible PRACTICABLE, from adoption by persons of a different religious belief than that of the minor or his parents, unless the natural parent or parents specifically indicate or consent to a different choice;* (2) the natural parents, from hurried and abrupt decisions to give up the child; and (3) the adopting parents, by providing them information about the child and his background, and protecting them from subsequent disturbance of their relationships with the child by natural parents.

The General Assembly further declares that this sub-title is related to the sub-title on "Child Care" of Article 88A, Sections 19-31, of this Code, and should be read in relation thereto.

77. (Jurisdiction and Venue.) The Circuit Courts of the several counties of this State, sitting in equity, and any court of Baltimore City having equity jurisdiction, shall have jurisdiction of all petitions for adoption under this sub-title. Any such petition may be filed in the county, or in Baltimore City, as the case may be, in which *at the time of filing the petition* (1) the petitioner or petitioners have their domicile; or (2) **the person to be adopted is domiciled;** *the petitioner or petitioners have had their place of abode for a period of at least 90 days next preceding the filing of the petition;* or (3) any lawfully licensed child placement agency, having legal or physical care, custody or control of the person to be adopted is located; **or** (4) *such petition* **or** (4) *the person to be adopted is domiciled, if such person be an adult or be related by blood or marriage to the petitioner;* or (5) *such petition* may be filed in any court having equity jurisdiction which had prior to the filing of the petition for adoption assumed a continuing jurisdiction over the custody of the person to be adopted. Provided, however, except in **[(4)]** (5) above no such petition shall be filed unless either the person to be adopted or the custodian shall be physically within this State and subject to the jurisdiction of the courts thereof. PROVIDED, THAT, IN ALLEGANY, GARRETT AND WASHINGTON COUNTIES, THE CIRCUIT COURTS, SITTING IN EQUITY, SHALL HAVE JURISDICTION OF ALL PETITIONS FOR ADOPTION UNDER THIS SUB-TITLE. ANY SUCH PETITION MAY BE FILED IN ALLE-