

CHAPTER 676
(House Bill 626)

AN ACT to repeal and re-enact, with amendments, Section 67 of Article 16 of the Annotated Code of Maryland (1966 Replacement Volume), title "Chancery," subtitle "Adoption," designating paragraph numbers and providing that religion shall MAY not be a factor to consider in adoption proceedings if the court determines that the infant does not have sufficient religious background, training or beliefs.

SECTION 1. *Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Maryland,* That Section 67 of Article 16 of the Annotated Code of Maryland (1966 Replacement Volume), title "Chancery," subtitle "Adoption," be and it is hereby repealed and re-enacted, with amendments, to read as follows:

67.

(a) The General Assembly hereby declares its conviction that the policies and procedures for adoption contained in this subtitle are socially necessary and desirable, having as their purpose the threefold 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 Garrett and Washington counties), whenever 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 a 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.

(b) *In determining the merits of a petition for adoption, the court shall MAY consider the religious background, training and beliefs of the natural parents, the adopting parents and the infant; but if the court determines that the infant does not have sufficient religious background, training or beliefs to be a factor in the adoption, it may make its decision without regard to same.*

(c) The General Assembly further declares that this subtitle is related to the subtitle on "Child Care" of Article 88A, Sections 19-32, of this Code, and should be read in relation thereto.

SEC. 2. *And be it further enacted,* That this Act shall take effect July 1, 1969.

Approved May 14, 1969.

CHAPTER 677
(House Bill 629)

AN ACT to add new Section 118A to Article 2B of the Annotated Code of Maryland (1968 Replacement Volume and 1968 Supple-