New Maryland Law Restricts Public Access to Divorce Records Starting October 1

The law narrows public inspection of certain divorce case records; a final divorce decree is not covered by the new restriction.

MD, UNITED STATES, October 2, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Blattner Family Law Group, a family law firm based in Towson serving Baltimore County and the surrounding Maryland counties, is sharing information for local families about a new Maryland law that restricts public access to certain divorce case records. Under Senate Bill 426, effective October 1, 2026, a records custodian (the official responsible for keeping the record) must deny public inspection of an application for divorce, a financial record submitted as part of a divorce proceeding, a record of a divorce settlement, and a custody order, unless an exception applies.

The new restriction does not apply to a final divorce decree, the document that ends a marriage; that document's accessibility continues to be governed by Maryland's separate, general rules on court-record access. For the records the law does cover, a custodian must still release them to a requester who is a “person in interest” (the person the record concerns), that person’s lawyer, or someone specifically authorized by a court order to inspect the record.

Even before this year, Maryland required certain protections for personal information in family law filings, including a notice process for restricted information and standard language shielding exhibits and agreements in family law orders, and a party could ask a judge to seal or shield a specific filing. Supporters of Senate Bill 426 argued that these case-by-case protections were not enough, since a divorce filing remained generally open to a public records request unless a party took one of those extra steps. The Maryland General Assembly passed Senate Bill 426 earlier this year. Governor Wes Moore vetoed it on May 22, citing the existing protections and favoring a case-by-case approach to balancing privacy against public access to court records. The General Assembly overrode that veto on August 4.

The change comes about three years after Maryland eliminated fault-based grounds for divorce. Since October 1, 2023, Maryland has recognized three grounds for absolute divorce under Md. Code, Family Law § 7-103: six-month separation, irreconcilable differences, and mutual consent. Blattner Family Law Group provides client information on how Maryland divorce law works

today, covering these three grounds and the filing process, so families can review the fuller picture before the new records rule takes effect.

Families with a pending or upcoming Maryland divorce can schedule a confidential consultation with Blattner Family Law Group's Towson office, in person or by phone.

About Blattner Family Law Group
Blattner Family Law Group is a family law firm in Towson, Maryland, led by managing attorney Julius M. Blattner. The firm represents clients across Baltimore County and the surrounding Maryland counties in divorce, child custody, adoption, child support, spousal support and alimony, property division, and paternity matters, using a structured Strategy, Implementation, and Resolution (SIR) process to give clients a written plan for their case.

Practice areas: divorce, child custody, adoption, child support, spousal support and alimony, property division, and paternity.

Locations: Headquarters at 100 West Pennsylvania Avenue, Suite 300, Towson, MD 21204, serving Baltimore County, Baltimore City, Harford, Howard, Anne Arundel, and Carroll counties.

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