



JAN H. GARDNER
Frederick County
Executive

HB 206

**Unaccompanied Minors in Need of
Shelter and Supportive Services**

County Position: SUPPORT

Date: January 28, 2020

Committee: Appropriations

Frederick County Executive Jan Gardner urges your **SUPPORT** for House Bill 206 – Unaccompanied Minors in Need of Shelter and Supportive Services.

Frederick County schools identified 155 unaccompanied homeless students. Unaccompanied homeless minors are often unable to access safe shelter, leaving them vulnerable to exploitation, dangerous living situations, and school drop out.

County Executive Gardner supports the provisions in the proposed legislation that:

- Aligns to the recommendations of the Workgroup to Study Shelter and Supportive Services for Unaccompanied Homeless Minors established by enabling legislation in 2019;
- Establishes that an unaccompanied minor in need of shelter has the same capacity as an adult to consent to shelter and supportive services, thereby incentivizing non-profit organizations to shelter this extremely vulnerable and underserved population;
- Requires shelter providers to obtain written consent from unaccompanied homeless minors before providing services;
- Requires shelter providers to notify parents or guardians within 72 hours of admitting an unaccompanied homeless minor, consistent with longstanding federal Runaway and Homeless Youth Act regulations governing emergency shelter programs for minors experiencing homelessness;
- Requires shelter providers to notify child welfare agencies of any suspected abuse or neglect;
- Establishes that shelter providers are not liable for civil damages or subject to any criminal or disciplinary penalties solely due to serving an individual who is a minor; and
- Provides for the appropriate review and oversight by the Department of Housing and Community Development.

Frederick County Executive Gardner urges favorable **SUPPORT** for House Bill 206.