

**SB 155 - SUPPORT**

**Testimony of Prince George's County Continuum of Care in Support of SB 155**  
*Higher Education – Tuition Exemption for Foster Care Recipients and Homeless Youth*  
Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee • January 27, 2021

Chairman Pinsky and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony in support of Senate Bill 155, on behalf of Prince George's County Continuum of Care (CoC). The CoC represents and partners with over 100 for-profit, non-profit, faith and government organizations serving families and individuals in crisis in the County. Our community stakeholders envision a County where youth homelessness does not exist and all youth and young adults are healthy, strong, safe, stable, connected, and thriving.

Prince George's County Continuum of Care supports SB 155 because it improves Maryland's tuition exemption for youth experiencing homelessness in order to streamline access to higher education and a pathway out of poverty for talented Maryland students. As service providers, we support individuals and families that are experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness. Youth and young adults particularly are challenged with opportunities that support them in gaining adequate resources, knowledge, and skills towards stable and thriving adulthood, achieving autonomy and self-sufficiency, and understanding their full potential. Passing the SB 155 is a critical step towards addressing this issue and alleviating stressors. Individuals should not have to prioritize housing needs over their educational goals.

SB 155 is consistent with other state laws that provide tuition exemptions for homeless youth, and rectifies deficiencies and provides critical clarifications to provisions in the existing law. The CoC strongly urges the committee to issue a Favorable Report on SB 155.

Thank you for your consideration. Please contact Renee Ensor- Pope, Assistant Director for Community Services, at [Renee.Pope@Maryland.gov](mailto:Renee.Pope@Maryland.gov) with any questions.

Sincerely,  
Renee Ensor-Pope

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