

HB 155 Testimony- CPMC.pdf

Uploaded by: CPMC, Coalition to Protect Maryland's Children

Position: FAV

THE COALITION TO PROTECT MARYLAND'S CHILDREN

Our Mission: To combine and amplify the power of organizations and citizens working together to keep children safe from abuse and neglect. We strive to secure the budgetary and public policy resources to make meaningful and measurable improvements in safety, permanence, and well-being.

Senate: Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee
SB 155- Higher Education – Tuition Exemption for Foster Care Recipients and Homeless Youth
Positions: SUPPORT

DATE: 1/27/2021

The Coalition to Protect Maryland's Children (CPMC)¹ is a consortium of Maryland organizations and individuals formed in 1996 to promote meaningful child welfare reform and the prevention of child abuse and neglect. CPMC supports passage of SB 155- Higher Education – Tuition Exemption for Foster Care Recipients and Homeless Youth

SB 155 improves Maryland's tuition exemption for youth experiencing homelessness in order to provide access to higher education and a pathway out of poverty for talented Maryland students by eliminating the recertification requirement, expanding eligibility to accompanied homeless youth, and creating an appeals process.

Expanding eligibility to accompanied youth experiencing homelessness may impact the fiscal note, however the cost savings to the state exponentially outweighs the cost of the potential fiscal impact. Investing in higher education access for youth experiencing homelessness results in considerable savings and increased revenue to the State over time. For instance, reduced reliance on government benefits and rates of incarceration results in savings to the State, and reduced unemployment and higher earnings result in increased revenue.

In addition, those who graduated college are 3.5 times less likely to be impoverished and nearly five times less likely to be imprisoned. In all, lifetime government expenditures are \$82,000 lower for college graduates than for those with high school degrees.^[1]

For the reasons stated above, we urge this committee to issue a favorable report on SB 155 to mitigate existing barriers to accessing higher education for youth experiencing homelessness throughout the state.

^[1] Trostel, Lumina Foundation, "It's Not Just the Money," 2015.

¹ Members in support of SB 155: Advocates for Children and Youth, Associated Catholic Charities, Baltimore Child Abuse Center, Board of Childcare, Child Justice Inc, Citizens Review Board for Children, Court Appointed Special Advocates, The Family Tree, State Council on Child Abuse and Neglect, MD. Chapter of American Academy of Pediatrics, Dianna Phillip, MD Chapter of National Association of Social Workers

YAB Testimony SB 155 final.pdf

Uploaded by: Day, DaeJanae

Position: FAV

Testimony 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

Members of the Prince George's County Youth Action Board
Prince George's County, Maryland

Chairman Pinsky and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to give our testimony in support of Senate Bill 155, which will improve Maryland's tuition waiver for youth experiencing homelessness.

The Prince George's County Youth Action Board believes that SB 155 is important because it will remove unnecessary obstacles for homeless youth interested in attending college for better opportunities and to achieve their educational goals. Most importantly, allowing access to stable housing while attending the institution will provide them with the support needed to pursue higher education.

This bill will allow homeless youth the option to attend school, prevent youth from searching for alternative ways to survive, and break the stigma of how homeless youth are viewed currently (as one who is lazy, does not want to work or education, etc.). Youth who are currently enrolled or considering enrollment can also receive work study with this Waiver. Overall, the Tuition Waiver Bill will bring an increased awareness to the topic of homeless youth and young adults in the state of Maryland and nationwide.

We also ask that you consider removing the annual recertification for the waiver. Annual recertification often puts youth in positions that make it difficult to reapply because of a potential loss of documents or changes in circumstances, possibly resulting in re-traumatizing them. Additionally, with the decrease in employment opportunities or loss of jobs due to COVID-19, schools are completely unaffordable to a person who is homeless and unemployed. Adjusting the bill will meet the needs of a youth that have been affected by COVID-19.

Education is the building block that can ensure the success of a youth. This can be the support for which a homeless youth needs to be successful. They will be able to focus on other areas of life such as mental health, employment, and recreational activities – please make sure students struggling with housing instability during and after the Covid-19 pandemic can access education. We strongly urge you to support SB 155.

Thank you for your consideration,

The Prince Georges County Youth Action Board
425 Brightseat Road
Landover, Maryland 20784

Health Care for the Homeless - SB 155 FAV - Tuitio

Uploaded by: Diamond, Joanna

Position: FAV



**HEALTH CARE FOR THE HOMELESS TESTIMONY
IN SUPPORT OF
SB 155 - Higher Education - Tuition Exemption for Foster Care Recipients and
Homeless Youth - Alterations and Reports**

**Senate Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee
January 27, 2021**

Health Care for the Homeless supports SB 155, which would improve Maryland’s tuition exemption for youth experiencing homelessness in order to provide access to higher education and a pathway out of poverty for talented Maryland students.

As Maryland’s leading provider of integrated health services and supportive housing for individuals and families experiencing homelessness, we serve the needs of the most vulnerable and underserved populations—including foster youth and homeless youth. Youth experiencing homelessness already face unique and oftentimes insurmountable barriers to basic health care. This bill will remove one more potential barrier and support these individuals who are obtaining something as fundamental as an education.

For reasons ranging from rejection due to sexual orientation, gender identity, pregnancy, or disability, to exiting the foster care or juvenile justice systems without skills or resources needed to live independently, these individuals must be supported in pursuing an education. The state must take action and do what it can to support students going through hardships, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. Education is critically important – please make sure students struggling with housing instability can access education. We urge you a favorable report on SB 155.

Health Care for the Homeless is Maryland’s leading provider of integrated health services and supportive housing for individuals and families experiencing homelessness. We work to prevent and end homelessness for vulnerable individuals and families by providing quality, integrated health care and promoting access to affordable housing and sustainable incomes through direct service, advocacy, and community engagement. We deliver integrated medical care, mental health services, state-certified addiction treatment, dental care, social services, and housing support services for over 10,000 Marylanders annually at sites in Baltimore City and Baltimore County. For more information, visit www.hchmd.org.

PGC CoC_SB155.pdf

Uploaded by: Gourdin, Kelly

Position: FAV

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 with any questions.

Sincerely,

Renee Ensor-Pope

Renee Ensor Pope
Assistant Director for Community Services
Pronouns: She/Her/Hers
Prince George's County Department of Social Services
805 Brightseat Road
Landover, Maryland 20785
301.909.6316 phone
301.909.6331 fax

SB155_DHS_Support.pdf

Uploaded by: Graziano, Lauren

Position: FAV

DATE: January 27, 2021

BILL NUMBER: Senate Bill 155

COMMITTEE: Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

BILL TITLE: Higher Education - Tuition Exemption for Foster Care Recipients and Homeless Youth - Alterations and Reports

DHS POSITION: Support

The Department of Human Services (DHS) respectfully offers this letter of support regarding Senate Bill 155 (SB 155). This bill impacts prior, current, and future DHS youth who are eligible for the tuition waiver program. This bill ensures the services offered as part of the tuition waiver program are easily accessed, supports safe and stable housing for vulnerable young adults, and puts in place appeals procedures to review decisions made when a youth is denied on-campus housing.

SB 155 would require public institutions of higher education to provide priority consideration for on-campus housing to homeless and foster youth who are exempt from tuition payment. Additionally, institutions of higher education must: (1) make the application for tuition exemption available to all prospective and current students, (2) notify students of the application, and (3) establish a process for foster care recipients and homeless youth to appeal a denial of a tuition exemption application. Lastly, the bill requires each public institution of higher education to report certain data annually on foster care recipients and homeless youth, including those who were denied the tuition waiver, the reason for the denial, as well as the outcomes of any appeals.

Education is a foundation and pathway used to promote independence and self-sufficiency for youth. Maryland foster youth who have goals of attending college or a university are able to do so with the financial assistance of the Foster Care Tuition Waiver and the Education and Training Voucher. The tuition waiver is a major benefit that can make a difference in the decision-making for a youth who is a current or former recipient of foster care services.

Housing stability is a crucial first step towards success in young adulthood, especially for those youth exiting foster care. The National Youth in Transition (NYTD) database provides information on youth over three points of time (at ages 17, 19, and 21). It supplies insight on the challenges of housing stability for youth exiting foster care and transitioning to the adult world. For youth that remain in care until ages 19 or 21, the NYTD data shows that youth experience homeless at a rate of 4.5% and 6.5% respectively. This may seem small, but is by no means insignificant. NYTD data also shows that outcomes for youth who leave care before ages 19 or 21 are worse than their counterparts who remain in care longer. Nationally, approximately 32% percent of those who left care before reaching age 19 experienced homelessness, and 44% of those who left care before age 21 experienced homelessness.

Given the number of youth who utilize the tuition waiver, and the number of youth who we know experience homelessness, SB 155 may alleviate housing burdens for vulnerable youth while they are attending college.

Thank you for the opportunity to offer support for SB 155. We ask the committee to give SB 155 a favorable report.



SB 155 Sen. Washington Testimony_Attachment.pdf

Uploaded by: griffin, christine

Position: FAV

SB 155 Changes to Md. Code Educ. § 15-106.1

Current Law	Problem	SB 155 Change	Rationale
Requires annual verification of homelessness	Results in traumatic loss of waiver, which in turn causes drop-out, loss of all financial aid, and return to homelessness	Repeals annual verification of homelessness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technical correction that remedies an unintended and unforeseen consequence of the annual verification requirement. Students access the waiver, use financial aid to secure stable housing, then must re-verify homelessness and lose the waiver because they are housed. This causes the student to lose all financial aid, which in turn causes them to lose their housing and become homeless again. The legislature did not intend for students to remain homeless throughout college in order to receive the waiver and understands that housing is necessary to support academic success. • No other state with a homeless youth tuition waiver requires annual verification of homelessness • Lessens administrative burden for institutions and documentation challenges for students • Congress passed federal legislation in December 2020 that repeals annual verification of homelessness on the FAFSA
Limits eligibility to “unaccompanied” homeless youth	Excludes youth experiencing homelessness with a parent/guardian	Repeals eligibility requirement that student must be “unaccompanied”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth experiencing homelessness with a parent/guardian experience the same barriers to higher education and have the same need for assistance as unaccompanied youth • MD is the only state with a homeless youth tuition waiver that limits eligibility to “unaccompanied youth” • MD’s parallel foster youth tuition waiver grants eligibility to youth who have reunified with family or been adopted • This change will not result in significant increase in t
No requirement that institutions provide an	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many institutions do not provide an application and rely upon staff to 	Requires institutions to make an application available and notify students of the application	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making an application available will provide a mechanism for students to self-identify as homeless and receive assistance accessing the tuition waiver and other financial aid

application or appeal process	<p>proactively identify potentially eligible students</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of awareness of tuition waiver among students and financial aid staff • Inconsistent and incorrect application of tuition waiver law at institution level 	Requires institutions to provide an appeal process that includes notice, opportunity to be heard, and written decision within 30 days of appeal submission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing an appeal process will give waiver applicants a mechanism to challenge erroneous eligibility determinations and will promote consistent and proper systemic implementation of the waiver law
No reference to on-campus housing priority or other housing supports	Waiver recipients need stable housing in order to successfully attend and graduate from college	Requires that institutions of higher education that provide on-campus housing establish a priority for waiver recipients, including for any housing that is available during breaks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On-campus housing is limited at many 4-year institutions and is insufficient to meet the needs of all students. Accordingly, institutions prioritize certain students for on-campus housing. • Establishing an on-campus housing priority for homeless youth waiver recipients promotes housing stability and supports their educational success while imposing no additional cost to institutions. • Consistent with numerous other states that have on-campus housing priorities for homeless college students.
Defines “tuition” without specific reference to fall, winter, spring, and summer terms	Institutions have attempted to deny waiver coverage for winter and summer terms	Specifies that “tuition” includes charges for the fall, winter, spring, and summer terms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoids misapplication of the waiver law. The existing definition of “tuition” should be interpreted to include charges for any and all academic terms. MHEC guidance currently specifies that the waiver applies to fall, winter, spring, and summer terms.
Does not specify that eligibility determination must be honored by subsequent institutions	A student could lose waiver eligibility if they transfer schools	Specifies that a receiving institution must honor the eligibility determination of an originating institution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensures continuity for students, including students who start at a 2-year institution and transfer to a 4-year institution • Particularly important to specify this requirement given that SB 155 repeals annual verification of homelessness
Requires institutions to	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current data does not provide 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requires institutions/MHEC to 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotes transparency and enables MHEC and MGA to monitor implementation of tuition waiver law

provide certain aggregate data to MHEC annually, and requires MHEC to compile data in annual report to MGA	<p>information about the number of waiver denials or terminations and the bases for these denials or terminations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Institutions may be using inconsistent or incorrect forms 	<p>report on the number and basis of denials and terminations, as well as the number and outcome of appeals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requires institutions to provide copies of any forms used, such as waiver application and appeal forms 	
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SB 155 Sponsor Amendments

Current Law	Problem	SB 155 Change	Rationale
Provides list of specific entities that can verify homelessness	List is too limited and would exclude State-funded programs serving homeless youth and federally-funded TRIO programs	Adds additional entities to list of who can verify homelessness	Conforms to other state laws and expanded list of entities that can verify homelessness for FAFSA purposes pursuant to recent federal legislation
Does not provide for a homeless youth liaison at higher education institutions	Students experiencing homelessness need support accessing financial aid and other resources	Requires institutions to designate a liaison within the financial aid office or other appropriate office to assist homeless youth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having a single point of contact for homeless youth is a national best practice that is reflected in other state laws and already implemented at a number of Maryland institutions • Will not impose additional cost on institutions as existing staff can be designated as a liaison • Will lead to specialized expertise in financial aid offices
Data reports are not disaggregated based on demographics	It is unclear whether there are equity issues with tuition waiver access and implementation	Requires that data reported are disaggregated by race, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, and gender identity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotes transparency and equity, and allows MGA monitoring • Institutions can easily request demographic info on tuition waiver application even if they are not currently collecting it

Sen. Mary Washington Testimony SB155 Hearing 1-27

Uploaded by: griffin, christine

Position: FAV

MARY L. WASHINGTON, PH.D
Legislative District 43
Baltimore City

Education, Health, and
Environmental Affairs Committee

Chair
Joint Committee on Ending
Homelessness

Chair
Joint Committee on Children,
Youth, and Families



THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Annapolis Office
James Senate Office Building
11 Bladen Street, Room 102
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
410-841-3145 · 301-858-3145
800-492-7122 Ext. 3145
Mary.Washington@senate.state.md.us

SUPPORT – SB 155
Higher Education - Tuition Exemption for Foster Care Recipients and Homeless Youth – Alterations and Reports

Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee

January 27, 2021

Testimony of Senator Mary Washington

Chair Pinsky, Vice-Chair Kagan and Members of the Committee,

I respectfully urge you to vote favorable with amendments on Senate Bill 155, which makes several necessary changes to Maryland's existing tuition waiver for unaccompanied homeless youth (codified at Md. Code § 15-106.1) to address implementation challenges and bring Maryland's tuition waiver law in line with other states.

Maryland led the nation in 2014 when we passed unanimous bipartisan legislation creating a tuition exemption for unaccompanied homeless youth attending public colleges, universities, and vocational training programs. I am proud to have sponsored that legislation with fellow Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee member Senator Ed Reilly. We recognized the promise of higher education to provide a pathway out of poverty for talented students who overcome the immense challenges of homelessness to achieve college readiness. We also understood the significant return on investment that results from each additional year of subsidized education in terms of increased employment and earnings, improved health, reduced reliance on government benefits, and reduced rates of incarceration. Finally, we saw the opportunity to advance racial equity given that inequitable college access has locked in historic privileges and oppression, and that youth experiencing homelessness in Maryland are disproportionately Black and youth of color. We knew that as these future thought-leaders find the open doors that college can bring, we will all benefit from their insights and leadership.

The need for and benefits of the homeless youth tuition waiver are as clear in 2021 as they were seven years ago, and perhaps even more urgent. I remain committed to ensuring that our waiver law achieves the legislature's intent and its promise to Maryland's stellar students. Since 2014, we have learned from unforeseen challenges with implementation of Maryland's tuition waiver law as well as from other states that have passed similar laws in the intervening years. Attached to my testimony is a chart

that sets forth in detail problematic provisions in the existing tuition waiver law, SB 155’s proposed changes to these provisions, and the rationale for these changes. In terms of highlights, I emphasize that Maryland is the only state with a homeless youth tuition waiver that excludes youth who are experiencing homelessness with a parent or guardian and the only state that requires annual verification of homelessness. These limitations have profoundly negative consequences, as detailed in the attached chart, and must be remedied to ensure the effectiveness of our waiver and bring Maryland in line with best practices. Also included in the attachment is a chart that similarly provides a detailed explanation of amendments that I am presenting for the Committee’s consideration. These amendments are not in response to opposition or concerns about the bill, but instead reflect additional improvements that I developed after pre-filing.

Data from the Maryland Higher Education Commission’s “Maryland Student Financial Aid” annual reports on the number of youth accessing the tuition waiver and the amount of aid awarded are provided in the chart below.

2014-2015	Community Colleges	Univ. System of Maryland	Morgan State Univ.	State Total
Number	17	11	4	32
Cost	\$38,595 (\$2,270/student)	\$79,310 (\$7,210/student)	\$37,786 (\$9,446)	\$155,691
2015-2016				
Number	65	18	11	94
Cost	\$137,820 (\$2,120/student)	\$159,132 (\$8,840/student)	\$85,825 (\$7,802/student)	\$382,777
2016-2017				
Number	64	42	8	114
Cost	\$131,631 (\$2,056 /student)	\$361,157 (\$8,598 /student)	\$71,919 (\$8,989 /student)	\$564,707
2017-2018				
Number	112	67	16	195
Cost	\$326,420 (\$2,914 /student)	\$597,090 (\$8,911 /student)	\$120,407 (\$7,525 /student)	\$1,043,917

This chart reflects that the cost of the tuition waiver per student, per higher education institution segment, and statewide, is relatively low in that it covers only tuition, not room and board or other expenses. Providing free tuition enables homeless students to enroll in college and access other aid, such as the federal Pell Grant, which they can use towards these additional costs. Though SB 155 amends the tuition waiver law to include

accompanied homeless youth, the cost to institutions can be expected to remain low. According to the Maryland State Department of Education Report Card for Academic Year 2018-2019, the most recent reporting year, a total of 720 Maryland high school graduates experienced homelessness. See <https://reportcard.msde.maryland.gov/Graphs/#/Graduation/GradRate/1/6/3/8/99/XXXX/2019>. Due to the immense challenges they face, only a fraction of graduating high school students experiencing homelessness are college ready, elect to pursue higher education, and successfully enroll in a two-year or four-year institution. According to Chapin Hall's Voices of Youth Count national survey, young adults who experienced homelessness were less than one-third as likely to be enrolled in a four-year college as stably housed peers. See Kull, M. A., Morton, M. H., Patel, S., Curry, S., & Carreon, E. (2019). Missed opportunities: Education among youth and young adults experiencing homelessness in America. Chicago, IL: Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago.

For those relatively few talented and hardworking students who are able to overcome the challenges of homelessness to make it to college, we must ensure that tuition is not the final insurmountable barrier that prevents them from accessing higher education and a pathway out of poverty. I welcome your partnership in this important effort and urge you to vote favorable with amendments on SB 155.

In Partnership,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Mary Washington".

Senator Mary Washington
Maryland 43rd District

SB 155 Letter of Support (SHIP) 012221.pdf

Uploaded by: Hinde, Ed

Position: FAV



Student Homelessness
Initiative Partnership
of Frederick County

P.O. Box 1629 • Frederick Maryland 21702 • 240-415-8971

SB 155 - SUPPORT

Testimony of Student Homelessness Initiative Partnership (SHIP) of Frederick County 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 the Student Homelessness Initiative Partnership (SHIP) of Frederick County. SHIP believes in the power and positive impact of education that will alter the trajectory of a life. Operating at the intersection of education and homelessness, SHIP works to reduce barriers to academic attainment for youth experiencing homelessness and connect them to community, resources, youth-centric programming, while advocating for equity in the systems that serve young people.

SHIP of Frederick County supports SB 155 because it improves Maryland's tuition exemption for youth experiencing homelessness in order to provide access to higher education and a pathway out of poverty for Maryland students. As a non-profit that works exclusively with unhoused students and youth, SHIP knows the impact of education as an intervention to end youth homelessness. Passing SB 155 is a critical step towards addressing educational inequities and securing more opportunities for our most vulnerable youth. With the passage of SB 155, we at SHIP know that more youth experiencing homelessness will have equal opportunity to engage in higher education, leading to more secure employment, housing, and overall stability. The passage of SB 155 is critical if we hope to end youth homelessness statewide.

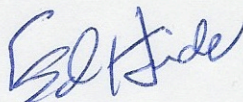


- Page Two -

SB 155 is consistent with other state laws that provide tuition exemptions for homeless youth, and will effectively address problems with Maryland's law.

SHIP of Frederick County strongly urges the committee to issue a Favorable Report on SB 155.
Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Ed Hinde", is written over the typed name.

Ed Hinde,
Executive Director

MAP testimony - SB 155 - Tuition Waiver.pdf

Uploaded by: Jefferson , Stacey

Position: FAV



TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 155

Higher Education – Tuition Exemption for Foster Care Recipients and Homeless Youth – Alterations and Reports

*Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee
January 27, 2021*

Submitted by Stacey Jefferson and Julia Gross, Co-Chairs

Member Agencies:

Advocates for Children and Youth
Baltimore Jewish Council
Behavioral Health System Baltimore
CASH Campaign of Maryland
Catholic Charities
Episcopal Diocese of Maryland
Family League of Baltimore
Fuel Fund of Maryland
Health Care for the Homeless
Homeless Persons
Representation Project
Job Opportunities Task Force
League of Women Voters of Maryland
Loyola University Maryland
Maryland Catholic Conference
Maryland Center on Economic Policy
Maryland Community Action
Partnership
Maryland Family Network
Maryland Hunger Solutions
Paul's Place
Public Justice Center
St. Vincent de Paul of Baltimore
Welfare Advocates

Marylanders Against Poverty

Stacey Jefferson, Co-Chair
P: 410-637-1900 ext 8578
C: 443-813-9231

E: stacey.jefferson@bhsbaltimore.org

Julia Gross, Co-Chair
P: 410-528-0021x6029

E: jgross@mdhungersolutions.org

Marylanders Against Poverty (MAP) strongly supports SB 155, which improves Maryland's tuition waiver for unaccompanied homeless youth. SB 155 conforms waiver eligibility criteria to other states by including accompanied youth, repeals the problematic annual verification requirement, establishes an application and appeal process, and enhances reporting requirements to promote equity and transparency.

The reforms in SB 155 are needed to ensure that Maryland's tuition waiver achieves its purpose of providing college access for youth experiencing homelessness. The legislature established the homeless youth tuition waiver in 2014 with unanimous bipartisan approval, but its impact has been limited in the intervening years. The waiver is currently available only to unaccompanied youth, though youth experiencing homelessness with a parent or guardian face similar challenges to college readiness and access. The annual verification process in the current law causes recipients to lose the waiver if they get housing, which leads to traumatic and unintended returns to homelessness. No other state with a homeless youth tuition waiver limits eligibility to only unaccompanied youth or requires annual verification of homelessness. SB 155 removes these barriers and aligns our tuition waiver with that of other states.

Ensuring college access for youth experiencing homelessness interrupts intergenerational poverty, advances racial equity, and results in long-term cost savings for the State. Maryland's Two-Generation Family Economic Security Commission found that post-secondary education is one of the most effective ways to overcome intergenerational poverty.¹ Intergenerational poverty and homelessness – including youth homelessness – are driven by systemic racism. SB 155 will ensure that youth experiencing homelessness, who are disproportionately Black youth and youth of color, have access to higher education and a pathway out of homelessness and poverty. Investing in college access for youth experiencing homelessness results in considerable savings and increased revenue to the State over time due to reduced unemployment, incarceration, and reliance on government benefits as well as increased earnings. Youth experiencing homelessness must navigate incredible barriers to make it to college – they are among the most talented and hardworking students in our State. The legislature must not allow tuition to be the final barrier that thwarts their educational goals.

MAP appreciates your consideration and urges the committee to issue a favorable report for SB 155.

Marylanders Against Poverty (MAP) is a coalition of service providers, faith communities, and advocacy organizations advancing statewide public policies and programs necessary to alleviate the burdens faced by Marylanders living in or near poverty, and to address the underlying systemic causes of poverty.

¹ See <https://governor.maryland.gov/ltgovernor/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2019/01/FINAL-Report-Two-Generation-Family-Economic-Security-Commission-12.28.18.pdf>

SB0155_FAV_MARFY_Tuition Exemption for Foster Care

Uploaded by: Kasemeyer, Pam

Position: FAV



Maryland Association of
Resources for Families & Youth

TO: The Honorable Paul G. Pinsky, Chair
Members, Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee
The Honorable Mary Washington

FROM: Pamela Metz Kasemeyer
Danna L. Kauffman

DATE: January 27, 2021

RE: **SUPPORT** – Senate Bill 155 – *Higher Education – Tuition Exemption for Foster Care Recipients and Homeless Youth – Alterations and Reports*

The Maryland Association of Resources for Families and Youth (MARFY) is a statewide network of private agencies serving at-risk children and youth and advocates for a system of care in Maryland that meets the needs of children and families. MARFY is a program of Maryland Nonprofits and **supports** the passage of Senate Bill 155.

Senate Bill 155 provides meaningful changes to the current tuition exemption program for foster care and homeless youth. The changes proposed broadens the number of youths who may be eligible for the program by redefining eligible homeless youth to include homeless youth as defined in the *McKinney–Vento Homeless Assistance Act* as opposed to the more limited definition of unaccompanied homeless youth. Broadening the definition recognizes that all youth who experience homelessness face the same challenges for success. The legislation expands the benefits under the program to include all expenses required to enroll and also prioritizes access to housing. An appeal process for those youth who apply for tuition exemption and are denied is created to ensure that denials are justified and reflective of errors in applications or unsubstantiated action by an institution. Finally, the bill requires expanded data collection and reporting requirements by public higher education institutions so that the Higher Education Commission can better evaluate the program and its impact.

Many of MARFY’s members are out-of-home placement providers for foster youth and/or administer independent living programs. These providers are acutely aware of the significant challenges faced by both youth who are in foster care or homeless. Access to higher education provides a critical opportunity to support these youth as they struggle to become self-supporting and identify and pursue a path toward success and stability. Furthermore, providing opportunities for housing is critical, not only for homeless youth but also youth in foster care who should be afforded the opportunity to live on campus where the support network for success is likely to be stronger. Passage of Senate Bill 155 will substantially enhance the State’s commitment to these youth and will undoubtedly result in enhanced life outcomes for the youth afforded the benefits of this program. A favorable report is requested.

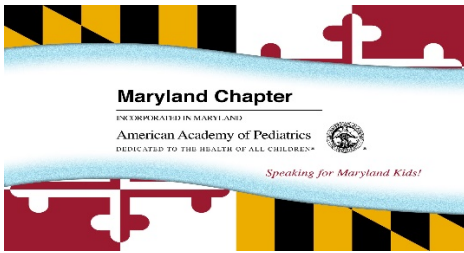
For more information call:

Pamela Metz Kasemeyer
Danna L. Kauffman
(410) 244-7000

SB0155_FAV_MDAAP_Tuition Exemption for Foster Care

Uploaded by: Kasemeyer, Pam

Position: FAV



TO: The Honorable Paul G. Pinsky, Chair
Members, Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee
The Honorable Mary Washington

FROM: Pamela Metz Kasemeyer
J. Steven Wise
Danna L. Kauffman

DATE: January 27, 2021

RE: **SUPPORT** – Senate Bill 155 – *Higher Education – Tuition Exemption for Foster Care Recipients and Homeless Youth – Alterations and Reports*

The Maryland Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics (MDAAP) is a statewide association representing more than 1,100 pediatricians and allied pediatric and adolescent healthcare practitioners in the State and is a strong and established advocate promoting the health and safety of all the children we serve. On behalf of MDAAP, we submit this letter of **support** for Senate Bill 155.

Senate Bill 155 broadens the current tuition exemption at public higher education institutions to include all homeless youth who have lived in Maryland for 1 year before application and meets the definition of homeless youth as defined in the *McKinney–Vento Homeless Assistance Act*. Currently, the program only applies to unaccompanied homeless youth. The legislation also expands the benefits under the program to include all expenses required to apply/attend an institution as well as prioritizing access to housing. The bill establishes an appeal process for those youth who are denied tuition exemption. Finally, the bill requires expanded data collection and reporting requirements by public higher education institutions to provide greater program accountability and will enable the Higher Education Commission to better evaluate the program and its impact.

Youth who are in foster care or are homeless are faced with incredible challenges to succeed. Access to higher education provides a critical opportunity to support these youth as they struggle to become self-supporting and identify and pursue a path toward success and stability. The changes to the program reflected in Senate Bill 155 provides critical access to homeless youth who face all of the challenges of homelessness but are not able to meet the narrow definition of being an unaccompanied minor. Furthermore, providing opportunities for housing benefits not only homeless youth but also foster youth who should be afforded the opportunity to live on campus where the support network for success is likely to be stronger. Senate Bill 155 is a notable improvement to the existing program. A favorable report is requested.

For more information call:

Pamela Metz Kasemeyer
J. Steven Wise
Danna L. Kauffman
410-244-7000

MD Catholic Conference_SB 155_FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: O'Day, Garrett

Position: FAV



ARCHDIOCESE OF BALTIMORE † ARCHDIOCESE OF WASHINGTON † DIOCESE OF WILMINGTON

January 27, 2021

SB 155

Higher Education - Tuition Exemption for Foster Care Recipients and Homeless Youth - Alterations and Reports

Senate Education, Health and Environmental Affairs

Position: Support

The Maryland Catholic Conference offers this testimony in SUPPORT of the Senate Bill 155. The Catholic Conference represents the public policy interests of the three (arch)dioceses serving Maryland, including the Archdioceses of Baltimore and Washington and the Diocese of Wilmington, which together encompass over one million Marylanders.

Senate Bill 155 makes alterations to the State provision of tuition waivers for foster care recipients and homeless youth. The bill would expand access to the program for homeless youth and provide continuity of learning for students in that category, even if they transfer to another institution. Additionally, it would require public higher education institutions to prioritize housing for foster care recipients and homeless youth.

As the Church values the dignity of human life above all else, we must do all we can to remedy homelessness through promoting “education, access to health care, and above all employment, for it is through free, creative, participatory and mutually supportive labor that human beings express and enhance the dignity of their lives.” (*Pope Francis, Evangelii Gaudium, 192*). It is thus imperative that our state provide homeless youth the opportunity to obtain a college degree, thus affording them the ability to obtain gainful employment and provide for themselves a place to call “home” of their own. It is of parallel importance to ensure that Maryland provides such opportunities for foster care recipients entrusted to the State’s care.

Homeless youth and foster care recipients are often be left to care for themselves upon reaching college age. The State’s provision of tuition waivers is a primary way for these children to have hope for a better future. Therefore, we urge this Committee to support anything to improve or expand upon this program and urge a favorable report on Senate Bill 155.

Tuition SB155.pdf

Uploaded by: Rojas, Psalms

Position: FAV



MARIAN HOUSE

Women Moving from Dependence to Independence

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB155

Higher Education – Tuition Exemption for Foster Care Recipients and Homeless Youth Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee – January 27, 2021

TO: Chairman Pinsky and Members of the Committee
FROM: Katie Allston, Executive Director
DATE: January 22, 2021

For over 38 years, Marian House has existed as a holistic, healing community for women and their children who are in need of housing and support services. We provide a safe, sober, and loving environment that challenges our residents to love and respect themselves, confront emotional and socioeconomic barriers, and transition to stable and independent lives.

Marian House supports SB 155 because it improves Maryland's tuition exemption for youth experiencing homelessness in order to provide access to higher education and a pathway out of poverty for talented Maryland students. As an organization deeply engaged in working with people experiencing homelessness, we see first-hand the numerous challenges that our clients encounter as a result of deep poverty, abandonment, and abuse and neglect, including weak academic foundations, limited family support, and lack of awareness of available financial resources. Yet, we also see our clients' dream for more and set their goals for careers that require higher education.

Passing SB 155 is a critical step in addressing the barriers that youth experiencing homelessness face, giving them increased access to college. It is no secret that post-secondary attainment is increasingly necessary to move out of poverty and homelessness, and live a healthy, and productive life.

SB 155 is consistent with other state laws that provide tuition exemptions for homeless youth, and will effectively address problems with Maryland's current law.

Marian House strongly urges the committee to issue a Favorable Report on SB155. Thank you for your consideration.

Thank you for your support,

Katie Allston, LCSW-C
Executive Director

SB155_MCRC_FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Stern, Isadora

Position: FAV



Maryland Consumer Rights Coalition

**Testimony to the Senate Education, Health, & Environmental Affairs Committee
SB 155 : Higher Education - Tuition Exemption for Foster Care Recipients and Homeless Youth - Alterations
and Reports
Position: Favorable**

January 27, 2021

The Honorable Paul Pinsky, Chair
Senate Education, Health, & Environmental Affairs Committee
2 West, Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401
cc: Members, Education, Health, & Environmental Affairs Committee

Chair Pinsky and Members of the Committee:

The Maryland Consumer Rights Coalition (MCRC) is a statewide coalition of individuals and organizations that advances economic justice and financial inclusion for Maryland consumers through research, education, direct service, and advocacy. Our 8,500 supporters include consumer advocates, practitioners, and low-income and working families throughout Maryland.

We are writing today to testify in support of SB 155.

In 2017, the General Assembly established the Unaccompanied Homeless Youth Tuition (UHY) waiver because of its commitment to helping foster youth and unaccompanied homeless youth earn a college degree, increase their future job opportunities, and improve their life outcomes.

Since the implementation of the UHY waiver, advocates and UHY waiver recipients have discovered that there are significant barriers to receiving the tuition waiver and it has been underutilized. SB 155 aims to improve the use of the UHY waiver and remove barriers for students needing to access the waiver.

For example, the annual recertification requirement requires students to recertify their homeless status each year in order to qualify for the tuition waiver. This requirement unfairly punishes students if they choose to work while attending school and are able to afford housing as a result. Youth who enter college unaccompanied and homeless face significant financial barriers to college completion even if they are able to secure housing at some later point. Therefore, these students should have access to the tuition waiver throughout the time needed to earn a degree, regardless of their housing status.



Maryland Consumer Rights Coalition

Right now, we are seeing the impact that COVID-19 is having on student college enrollment and students' decisions to pursue higher education. Fall undergraduate enrollment declined by 3.6% from the fall of 2019.¹ For students who've experienced homelessness or have foster care involvement, the ability to afford college tuition greatly impacts their decision to attend or remain in college. COVID-19 is straining student budgets, and SB 155 will help stop students from choosing between their education or food, housing, and other basic necessities.

Students experiencing homelessness overcome so many barriers in order to get college ready. Tuition should not be another barrier for these students.

The General Assembly must renew its commitment and dedication to helping foster youth and unaccompanied homeless youth gain a college education.

For all these reasons, I urge you to move favorably on SB 155.

Best,

Marceline White
Executive Director

1

<https://www.npr.org/2020/12/17/925831720/losing-a-generation-fall-college-enrollment-plummets-for-first-year-students>

SB155_MCRC_FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: White, Marceline

Position: FAV



Maryland Consumer Rights Coalition

**Testimony to the Senate Education, Health, & Environmental Affairs Committee
SB 155 : Higher Education - Tuition Exemption for Foster Care Recipients and Homeless Youth - Alterations
and Reports
Position: Favorable**

January 27, 2021

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Senate Education, Health, & Environmental Affairs Committee
2 West, Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401
cc: Members, Education, Health, & Environmental Affairs Committee

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For all these reasons, I urge you to move favorably on SB 155.

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Marceline White
Executive Director

1

<https://www.npr.org/2020/12/17/925831720/losing-a-generation-fall-college-enrollment-plummets-for-first-year-students>

SB155 Favorable Testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: White, Rachel

Position: FAV

To: The Honorable Chairman Pinsky and members of the EHEA Committee
From: Rachel White, JD, Child Welfare Policy Director
Re: **SB 155- Higher Education – Tuition Exemption for Foster Care Recipients and Homeless Youth**
Date: January 27, 2021
Position: **SUPPORT**

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony on **SB 155- Higher Education – Tuition Exemption for Foster Care Recipients and Homeless Youth**. Advocates for Children and Youth **supports this bill**.

Maryland proudly led the country when the General Assembly unanimously passed bipartisan legislation in 2014 establishing a tuition exemption for unaccompanied homeless youth attending public colleges and universities. The legislature recognized the promise of higher education to provide a pathway out of poverty and homelessness for youth who had overcome momentous barriers to achieve college readiness. ***Despite laudable legislative intent, Maryland's tuition exemption for homeless youth is out of step with other states and is failing our students.***

Challenges with the existing legislation include ineligibility for youth who are currently homeless and accompanied by their parent or caregiver. For example, a youth who is living with his parent in car is ineligible as was the case for a student at University of Maryland College Park. A second challenge includes requiring youth to certify that they are homeless every year which deters them from seeking housing causing them to choose between an education to mitigate their circumstances or housing. A third challenge is a lack of a uniformed process to determine who qualifies for the tuition waiver and no grievance or appeals process for students who are denied.

SB 155 improves Maryland's tuition exemption for youth experiencing homelessness in order to provide access to higher education and a pathway out of poverty for talented Maryland students by eliminating the recertification requirement, expanding eligibility to accompanied homeless youth, and creating an appeals process.

Expanding eligibility to accompanied youth experiencing homelessness may impact the fiscal note, however the cost savings to the state exponentially outweighs the cost of the potential fiscal impact. Investing in higher education access for youth experiencing homelessness results in considerable savings and increased revenue to the State over time. For instance, reduced reliance on government benefits and rates of incarceration results in savings to the State, and reduced unemployment and higher earnings result in increased revenue.

In addition, those who graduated college are 3.5 times less likely to impoverished and nearly five times less likely to be imprisoned. In all, lifetime government expenditures are \$82,000 lower for college graduates than for those with high school degrees.¹

For the reasons stated above, we urge this committee to issue a favorable report on SB 155 to mitigate existing barriers to accessing higher education for youth experiencing homelessness throughout the state.

¹ Trostel, Lumina Foundation, "It's Not Just the Money," 2015.

Youth Testimony in Support – SB 155.pdf

Uploaded by: Williamson, Sam

Position: FAV

SUPPORT – SB 155
Higher Education - Tuition Exemption for Foster Care Recipients and Homeless Youth -
Alterations and Reports
Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee
January 27, 2021
Testimony of Maryland youth leaders

Dear Chair Pinsky, Vice Chair Kagan, and Committee members,

We are writing as youth leaders with personal experience of homelessness to ask for your strong support for Senate Bill 155, which improves Maryland's tuition waiver for homeless youth. There are so many talented, intelligent youth struggling with homelessness, and we shouldn't have to give up on our dreams or on becoming the people we want to be just because we can't afford to go to college. It's a missed opportunity for us and for society when we can't go to college – if we had this opportunity, we would solve problems and really make such a huge difference in the world.

Youth struggling with homelessness have hopes of going to college, but it's hard to focus on going to school and how to pay for college when you have to focus on surviving. We are homeless not by choice, but by force. It is very hard out here when you don't have your parents or immediate family, or the backing of any support system. Some people's parents didn't want them because they are gay, or just don't care about them, or they grow up in foster care and then get kicked out and become homeless. It's just hard trying to find somewhere to lay your head and get your life together – it's just really hard. For youth trying to make it day-by-day, immediate financial needs like paying for housing, transportation, food, and childcare can take precedence – the possible long-term financial benefit of a degree doesn't matter if I don't have a safe place to sleep tonight. You can have a plan to follow your ambitions and stick to it to a tee, but tomorrow you could be on the streets and your plan has to change.

Finances are the biggest barrier to college, aside from maybe self-doubt, but that's actually tied back to finances too. It's hard to find out about opportunities like the tuition waiver or other financial assistance. Youth struggling with homelessness aren't aware that there are these avenues available until someone tells them about it. It's almost like you have to just get lucky with who you are talking to or your connections. There is a lot of anxiety that comes along with thinking about taking out loans for college, and this creates a general fear of moving forward. If we had some financial support to fall back on, then it wouldn't be such a big deal to put ourselves out there and try. It would make it possible to stop wishful thinking and pipe dreams and be able to put real effort into it and turn it into reality. Youth would have something positive and engaging that could let us contribute to our communities and make major societal change. A lot of things would be so different – and for the better.

We understand that the waiver means colleges are missing out on money – but why would you let something so temporary trump the value of a lifelong education and the opportunity to contribute to society? It's a disappointment to us to hear that we can't go for our dreams

SUPPORT – SB 155
Testimony of Maryland youth leaders

because it costs too much. Going to college is no walk in the park for anyone. To have the opportunity to have some help even getting to the point where we can work really hard for our goals would be so important.

Coming from the communities we come from, decisions are usually just made for us without us really being part of it. We want our voices to be heard. People with power sometimes turn their heads away from the harsh reality we face. Everything may be okay in their small world, but outside of that there are people who go without, who have a lack of, who are hurting. Yet the people who have the most power to help or foster some solution turn their eyes away. They need empathy to understand that there are people who are worse off than them. The people are asking for these things because it's what they need. The opportunity to go to college tuition-free is life changing for youth struggling with homelessness. The fact that you are considering this bill is amazing – this is powerful. We ask you to please vote in favor of SB 155.

Thank you,

Klausa Monroe

Matthew Smith

Shoota Kask

Ifeoma Eleazu

Mariah Barker

Tania Downs

Emmanuel Coleman

Danean Fleming

Darlecia Dublin

BILL Testimony.SB155.pdf

Uploaded by: Young, Ron

Position: FAV



THE PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY GOVERNMENT

OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

BILL: Senate Bill 155 – Higher Education – Tuition Exemption for Foster Care Recipients and Homeless Youth – Alterations and Reports

SPONSOR: Senator Washington

HEARING DATE: January 27, 2021

COMMITTEE: Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

CONTACT: Intergovernmental Affairs Office, 301-780-8411

POSITION: SUPPORT

The Office of the Prince George's County Executive **SUPPORTS Senate Bill 155**, which provides technical corrections to the tuition waiver legislation passed in Maryland in 2014. The proposed legislation removes the unintended barriers to implementation and student access, clarifies eligibility, adds prioritizations for access to housing, and provides notification and appeal rights for students. These proposed improvements are in alignment with the best practice and will ensure that Maryland continues its strong commitment to provide viable educational pathways out of poverty and homelessness for youth who have disproportionately struggled in achieving college readiness.

Prince George's County has been serving unaccompanied homeless youth (UHY) since 2013. As a result of our innovative work in this space, the County has had the privilege of serving as a member of the Maryland SB 764/HB 823 statewide task force to study housing and supportive services for unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness. Maryland's Interagency Council on Homelessness was selected as a national *Way Home America 100 Day Challenge* site focused on the intersection of homelessness and secondary education, a U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Youth Homeless Demonstration Program site, and in partnership with innovative and dedicated youth serving agencies and youth leaders with lived experience across the State, have worked collaboratively to help craft the critical **Senate Bill 155** language before you today.

While the existing State law was groundbreaking, lessons learned from the field since its passing have revealed certain limitations and constraints that impede full realization of the intent of the unanimously supported bipartisan legislation. One

such limitation is the current requirement for homeless students to annually recertify their homeless status to maintain tuition exemption eligibility. Stable housing increases the likelihood of educational attainment. To achieve that stability, recipients of the homeless youth tuition exemption often use financial aid to secure housing, but once housed – under the current law - they are no longer considered homeless and lose the tuition exemption along with the financial aid. This has the unintended consequence of forcing youth to drop out and return to homelessness. **Maryland is the only state with a homeless youth tuition exemption that requires annual verification of homelessness.**

Another concern has been the underutilization of the waiver due to lack of awareness among students and the inconsistent implementation of waiver eligibility policy by colleges and universities. Many Maryland colleges and Universities do not have an effective mechanism for identifying students experiencing homelessness and helping them access financial aid and lack any process for students to challenge improper application of the homeless youth tuition exemption law. In 2019, as part of Prince George's County's 100 Day Challenge work in partnership with the University of Maryland, College Park, Bowie State University and Prince George's Community College, the County piloted the use of housing stability questions during student registration of incoming freshman for the fall of 2019-2020. 200 students were identified as homeless or significantly housing unstable. Without this intentional effort to identify youth in need of support and connecting them to tuition assistance, financial aid and campus and community support, these students would have remained in the shadows, struggling to succeed, and many would have seen their educational aspirations end.

Senate Bill 155 seeks to remedy this and other shortfalls in the current law by repealing the requirement of annual verification of homelessness; requiring each public institution of higher education in the state to make a tuition exemption application available to students and establish an appeal process for denials; granting priority for on-campus housing where applicable to tuition exemption recipients; and amending reporting requirements to allow for monitoring of eligibility determinations and appeals.

Annually, the County's UHY system serves an average of 115 youth, less than 10% of which, present as college ready. These youth have overcome significant trauma in their pursuit of their education. In addition to their schooling, they worry about how they will feed themselves, pay for necessities, obtain transportation and most importantly, where they will sleep. We must ensure that tuition is not the final insurmountable barrier to their educational success.

For the reasons stated above, the Office of the Prince George's County Executive **SUPPORTS Senate Bill 155** and asks for a **FAVORABLE** report.

2021 NASW SB 155 Senate Side.pdf

Uploaded by: Faulkner, Rachael

Position: FWA



Testimony before the Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee

Senate Bill 155: Higher Education - Tuition Exemption for Foster Care Recipients and Homeless Youth - Alterations and Reports

****SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENT****

January 27, 2021

Maryland's Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers represents social workers statewide. **We support Senate Bill 155:** Tuition Exemption for Foster Care Recipients and Homeless Youth - Alterations and Reports with **an amendment to raise the age limit for young adults to enroll from 25 to 26.**

Senate Bill 155 changes the way the status of homeless youth is verified; enables tuition waiver recipients to have priority for on-campus housing; requires an appeals process, and more.

Eliminating or at least mitigating the barrier of college tuition is an important strategy to encourage foster youth and those who are homeless to pursue higher education. Adults with a college education are higher wage earners; on an annual basis, those with a bachelor's degree earn about \$32,000 more than those whose highest degree is a high school diploma. This is a gap that continues to widen.

Why raise the age limit beyond which foster and homeless youth can enroll from 25 to 26? The adult brain isn't fully developed until age least age 25, and our foster and unaccompanied homeless youth have typically experienced a series of traumas that result in challenges growing into productive and self-sufficient adulthood. Despite an initial lack of interest in college, some may be more ready to enroll by 26.

In summary, we urge a favorable report for Senate Bill 155 to make changes in the current tuition waiver law to eliminate obstacles and encourage higher attendance numbers. We ask only that the age limit at which young people can enroll be raised by one year, to age 26, as yet another strategy to eliminate barriers and encourage participation in higher education.

Submitted by:

Judith Schagrin, LCSW-C
Chairperson, Legislative Committee

SB155_FWA_Homeless Persons Rep Proj_Lofgren

Uploaded by: Lofgren, Ingrid

Position: FWA



HOMELESS PERSONS REPRESENTATION PROJECT, INC.

201 North Charles Street, Suite 1104 Baltimore, MD 21201

SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENTS – SB 155

Higher Education - Tuition Exemption for Foster Care Recipients and Homeless Youth – Alterations and Reports

Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee – January 27, 2021

Testimony of Ingrid Lofgren, Director of Homeless Youth Initiative

Homeless Persons Representation Project, Inc. (HPRP) is a non-profit legal services organization that provides free legal representation to people who are homeless or at risk on issues that will lead to an end to their homelessness. HPRP's Homeless Youth Initiative serves youth and young adults under age 25 experiencing homelessness. HPRP strongly supports SB 155, which makes necessary changes to Maryland's existing tuition waiver law to ensure that it fulfills the legislature's intent to provide access to higher education for homeless youth. SB 155 is vital to ensuring that HPRP's clients and other unaccompanied youth are able to pursue their college dreams and transition to a stable, self-sufficient adulthood.

Many of us have been told that education is our right and that it is available for those who work hard. Unfortunately, this is more aspiration than reality. Particularly for youth experiencing homelessness, no amount of hard work can alter the reality that college is just too expensive and student debt too crushing for these youth to maintain stable housing, eat regular meals, and keep up with tuition and other school expenses. And with the unprecedented economic struggles during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, more youth are making difficult choices about where to put their limited financial resources. As a nation and in Maryland, we have had a reckoning with the inequalities that are perpetuated by our systems, including inequitable access to higher education. By supporting youth experiencing homelessness -- who are disproportionately Black, Indigenous, and People of Color -- this Committee has the opportunity to help right some of these historic wrongs.

Maryland's tuition exemption for homeless youth is out of step with other states and is failing our students, despite laudable legislative intent. Maryland's homeless youth tuition exemption is failing to achieve its purpose because:

- Only unaccompanied youth are currently eligible for the tuition exemption, but students experiencing homelessness with their family have the same need for assistance. MD is the only state that limits eligibility for its homeless youth tuition exemption to youth experiencing homelessness without a parent/guardian, rather than supporting all homeless students in accessing higher education.
- Requiring annual verification of homeless status to maintain tuition exemption eligibility has had the unintended and traumatic consequence of causing school dropout and returns to homelessness. Recipients of the homeless youth tuition exemption often use financial aid to secure housing, but once housed they are no longer considered homeless and accordingly lose the tuition exemption during the required process of annual verification of homelessness, must drop out of school, and often become homeless again. MD is the only state with a homeless youth tuition exemption that requires annual verification of homelessness.
- The tuition exemption is underutilized due to lack of awareness among students and inconsistent implementation by colleges and universities. Most Maryland colleges and universities do not have

an effective mechanism for identifying students experiencing homelessness and helping them access financial aid, and lack any process for students to challenge improper application of the homeless youth tuition exemption law.

SB 155 ensures the effectiveness of Maryland's homeless youth tuition exemption by:

- Supporting students experiencing homelessness with a parent/guardian by repealing the requirement that youth must be unaccompanied in order to access the tuition exemption;
- Repealing the requirement of annual verification of homelessness;
- Requiring that each public institution of higher education in the state must make a tuition exemption application available to students and establish an appeal process for denials;
- Granting priority for on-campus housing, if applicable, to tuition exemption recipients; and
- Amending reporting requirements to allow for high-level monitoring of eligibility determinations and appeals.

When youth experiencing homelessness persevere against all odds to make it to college, we must never allow tuition to prevent their educational success and stability.

Homeless Persons Representation Project urges the Committee to issue a Favorable with Amendments report on SB 155. If you have any questions, please contact Ingrid Lofgren at ilofgren@hprplaw.org or (443)286-1759.

MDCAPE 2021 HB 155 Discrim.pdf

Uploaded by: Sadwin, Ariel

Position: UNF



**Maryland's Voice for
Nonpublic Education**

RABBI ARIEL SADWIN
President

GARRETT J. O'DAY ESQ.
Chair, Steering Committee

P. GEORGE TRYFIATES
Director, Federal Programs

7 CHURCH LANE
SUITE 14
BALTIMORE, MD 21208
P: 410-484-3632
F: 443-450-3748

EMAIL: INFO@MDCAPE.ORG
WEB: WWW.MDCAPE.ORG
TWITTER: [@MD_CAPE](https://twitter.com/@MD_CAPE)
FACEBOOK: [@MDCAPE](https://www.facebook.com/@MDCAPE)

MARYLAND HOUSE WAYS & MEANS COMMITTEE

JANUARY 27, 2021

HOUSE BILL 155

COUNTY BOARDS AND PUBLIC AND NONPUBLIC
PREKINDERGARTEN PROGRAMS AND SCHOOLS
DISCRIMINATION – PROHIBITION

OPPOSE

Maryland CAPE is our state's chapter and one of 40 state chapters of the Council for American Private Education. Our network includes the Catholic, Christian, Evangelical Lutheran, Friends, Independent, Jewish, Lutheran, Montessori, Muslim, and Seventh Day Adventist school communities. We speak on behalf of roughly 120,000 nonpublic school students attending over one thousand nonpublic schools across our great state of Maryland.

In representing the interests of the nonpublic schools, Maryland CAPE has endless appreciation for the state programs that have benefited our schools and the families who have chosen these schools for their children's education. The state funded programs that are accessed by the nonpublic school community range from the purchase of school textbooks and curriculum to the purchase and installation of vital security components that ensures the safety of our students in a very dangerous world. Other funds have gone to update and maintain the aging facilities of nonpublic schools. Over the last few years, thousands of low-income children from across the state – a majority of which are from minority communities – have been given the opportunity to choose a nonpublic school using the BOOST scholarship that they received.

If House Bill 155 were to pass, creating a whole new slate of requirements for schools – public and nonpublic – the above programs will be put in peril. Moreover, the entire platform of nonpublic education will become undone. The nonpublic school community is mostly made up of faith-based schools which are guided by policies and provisions that are hundreds and even thousands of years old. They are not items that are put into place by the administration of a specific school. The policies, beliefs, and philosophies that are taught and upheld in these schools have always been protected by the free-exercise clause of the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution.

We ask you to ensure that these protections remain and to please report unfavorably on House Bill 155.

SB155_USM_INFO_CLARK.pdf

Uploaded by: Clark, Andy

Position: INFO



SENATE EDUCATION, HEALTH & ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE
Senate Bill 155 - Higher Education -
Tuition Exemption for Foster Care Recipients and Homeless Youth -
Alterations and Reports
January 27, 2021
Information

Chair Pinsky, Vice-Chair Kagan, and members of the committee, the University System of Maryland (USM) offers the following letter of information regarding Senate Bill 155.

USM Institutions are keenly aware of the barriers that face homeless students in attending an institution of higher education and successfully completing a degree program. The USM shares the values, intentions, and motivations behind Senate Bill 155 and would like to support homeless students in the best ways possible. As written, USM institutions foresee challenges in the verification and appeals process and the unknown cost. If the state is going to establish a new definition of what qualifies students as homeless for purposes of tuition, it is our belief that the verification of that homelessness status should be affirmed by the state agency authorized to make such a determination. A student would be able to be verified once and go to any school or seamlessly transfer from one school to another, without having to go through the process multiple times. Under the current bill, each USM institution would have to set up its own verification and appeals process and dedicate staff to that process, which would be costly.

Senate Bill 155 uses the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act definition of homelessness, a definition that was created for students under the age of 21 in the K-12 public education system. Currently USM institutions do not collect data on how many students are homeless under the McKinney-Vento definition and without this data it is impossible to estimate the cost to institutions. USM institutions currently provide a tuition waiver to any student who qualifies as an unaccompanied homeless youth as defined on the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), but the McKinney-Vento definition is much broader and would qualify an unknown number of students for tuition waivers. This definition was meant to keep K-12 students in school when they may be experiencing turbulent and rapidly changing living situations and was not intended for higher education purposes.

The USM hopes the committee considers a narrower definition of homelessness than McKinney-Vento provides and that the verification and appeal processes would reside with the state agency empowered to grant that application.

Thank you for allowing the USM to share our thoughts regarding Senate Bill 155.