



February 28, 2024

**Senate Bill 741-Public Senior Higher Institutions-Pregnant and Parenting Students-
Policy Requirements (Pregnant and Parenting Support Act)
Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee**

Position: SUPPORT

The Maryland Association of Resources for Families and Youth (MARFY) is an association of private child caring organizations providing foster care, group homes, and other services through more than 200 programs across Maryland. The members of MARFY represent providers who serve Maryland's most vulnerable children who are in out of home placements due to abuse, neglect or severe mental health, and medical needs. We operate group homes, treatment foster care programs and independent living programs, primarily serving the foster care population as well as a juvenile services population.

If passed, this bill thoughtfully addresses the diverse needs of pregnant and parenting students by requiring policies to include referrals to essential on-campus and off-campus services, such as the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), Childcare Scholarship Program, Maryland Medical Assistance Program, and Maryland's Children's Health Insurance Program. Additionally, it emphasizes the importance of providing information on adoption services, priority class registration, flexible scheduling options, and a comprehensive referral network of healthcare providers. Such measures are critical in removing the barriers that pregnant and parenting students face, enabling them to continue their education without undue hardship.

Moreover, SB 741's requirement for public senior higher education institutions to post these policies on their websites, promotes transparency and easy access to information, ensuring that students are aware of the support available to them. This proactive approach not only aids in the retention of students but also fosters a campus culture that values inclusivity, diversity, and equity. This legislation acknowledges the unique challenges faced by pregnant and parenting students and provides a

structured framework for support that will have a lasting positive impact on their academic and personal lives.

Overall, by supporting Senate Bill 741, you are affirming the state's commitment to the success and well-being of all students, paving the way for a more inclusive, supportive, and equitable higher education system in Maryland. **It is for these reasons we politely ask for a favorable report on Senate Bill 741.**

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Maryland Association of
Resources for Families & Youth