



Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

March 5, 2025

Senate Bill 687 – *Child Care Scholarship Program – Youth Transitioning From Foster Placement to Successful Adulthood Pilot Program – Establishment*

POSITION: SUPPORT

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 687, which establishes the Youth Transition from Foster Placement to Successful Adulthood Pilot Program within the Child Care Scholarship Program. This pilot initiative serves to assist foster youth ages 16-21 in applying for and accessing subsidies by eliminating administrative challenges that may hinder their ability to receive support. The program will run from January 1st, 2026, to December 31st, 2028, at which point it will be sunset.

Under Senate Bill 687, foster youth will no longer be required to show proof of employment or enrollment in an education or career training program to qualify for child care subsidies. Additionally, applicants will no longer be required to obtain written authorization from a non-resident parent or list the other parent, as both can be significant challenges for young parents who have aged out of the foster system. The Maryland Department of Education will be responsible for overseeing monthly expenditures, including the number of foster youth receiving scholarships and the amounts to which these scholarships grant. The department will be required to submit an annual report regarding the effectiveness of the program as it pertains to removing administrative barriers. This report will be due on or before December 1st of each year the program is active.

By reducing administrative constraints, young parents are better able to focus on their education and employment, drastically improving their long-term prospects. Furthermore, access to consistent, high-quality child care is crucial for early childhood development, especially in cases of children born to young parents that have experienced the foster care system. Senate Bill 687 represents a critical investment in both child well-being and the future success of young parents aging out of the foster care system. We urge a favorable report.

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