

JOANNE C. BENSON
Legislative District 24
Prince George's County

MAJORITY WHIP

Budget and Taxation Committee

Subcommittees

Education, Business, and Administration

Pensions

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Joint Committees

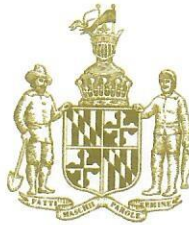
Audit and Evaluation Committee

Children, Youth, and Families

Ending Homelessness

Fair Practices and

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THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

James Senate Office Building
11 Bladen Street, Room 201
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
410-841-3148
800-492-7122 Ext. 3148
Joanne.Benson@senate.state.md.us

TESTIMONY

SENATOR JOANNE C. BENSON

**SB687 CHILD CARE SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM-YOUTH TRANSITIONING FROM FOSTER
PLACEMENT IN SUCCESSFUL ADULTHOOD PILOT ESTABLISHMENT**

Good afternoon, Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and esteemed members of the Education, Energy, and Environment Committee.

I am writing to express my staunch support for SB687, which seeks to establish the Youth Transitioning from Foster Placement to Successful Adulthood Pilot Program within the Child Care Scholarship Program. This bill is crucial to providing much-needed support to foster youth as they transition into adulthood.

Foster youth face unique challenges that can hinder their ability to achieve independence and success. According to the National Foster Youth Institute, approximately 20% of foster youth become instantly homeless when they age out of the system, and only about 50% have gainful employment by the age of twenty-four. Additionally, less than 3% of former foster youth obtain a college degree by age twenty-five. SB687 aims to address these alarming statistics by providing targeted assistance through the Child Care Scholarship Program, helping these young individuals access the resources they need to thrive.

The pilot program, scheduled to run from January 1, 2026, until December 31, 2028, will focus on facilitating access to subsidies within the Child Care Scholarship Program. This financial support is essential for foster youth to pursue education and employment opportunities, as many lack the family and social support systems that their peers rely on. By providing these subsidies, SB687 will help foster youth secure stable childcare arrangements, allowing them to focus on their personal and professional development.

Furthermore, the requirement for the State Department of Education to report annually on the program's status and goals will ensure transparency and accountability. This will allow for continuous evaluation and improvement of the program, ensuring that it effectively meets the needs of foster youth. The annual reports will provide valuable insights into the program's impact, highlighting successes and identifying areas for enhancement.

In addition to the immediate benefits for foster youth, SB687 has the potential to create long-term positive outcomes for our society. By investing in the future of these young individuals, we are not only helping them achieve their full potential but also reducing the likelihood of negative outcomes such as homelessness, unemployment, and involvement in the criminal justice system. This investment in foster youth will ultimately lead to a more prosperous and equitable society for all.

I urge the committee to support SB 687 and help create a brighter future for foster youth in our state. Thank you for your consideration