

# **SB0687\_Youth\_Transitioning\_from\_Foster\_Placement\_t**

Uploaded by: Cecilia Plante

Position: FAV



## **TESTIMONY FOR SB0687**

### **Child Care Scholarship Program – Youth Transitioning From Foster Placement to Successful Adulthood Pilot Program - Establishment**

**Bill Sponsor:** Senator Benson

**Committee:** Education, Energy, and the Environment

**Organization Submitting:** Maryland Legislative Coalition

**Person Submitting:** Cecilia Plante, co-chair

**Position:** FAVORABLE

I am submitting this testimony in strong support of SB0697 on behalf of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. The Maryland Legislative Coalition is an association of activists - individuals and grassroots groups in every district in the state. We are unpaid citizen lobbyists and our Coalition supports well over 30,000 members.

In Maryland, we have created programs to help youth coming out of foster care to become successful. One of the programs we have created is the Child Care Scholarship Program. However, the requirements can be difficult for youth to prove that they meet, even if they do meet those requirements.

This bill will create a pilot program that will run between January 2026 and December 2028. The purpose of it will be to help youth coming out of foster care get scholarships. It will remove barriers such as –

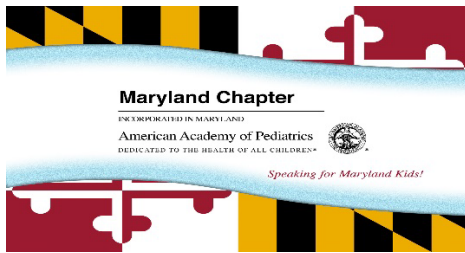
- Proof of employment or enrollment in and education or career training program
- The name of the other parent of the foster youth's child
- A written authorization from a parent if the parent is not residing in the same household as the child

The goal is to help more youth get scholarships, which in turn will help them transition more successfully. We strongly support this bill and recommend a **FAVORABLE** report in committee.

# **SB0687\_FAV\_MDAAP\_Child Care Scholarship Prog. - Yo**

Uploaded by: Christine Krone

Position: FAV



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.

**For more information call:**

Christine K. Krone  
J. Steven Wise  
Danna L. Kauffman  
410-244-7000

# **Maryland Catholic Conference\_FAV\_SB687.pdf**

Uploaded by: Diane Arias

Position: FAV



**March 5, 2025**

**Senate Bill 687**

**Child Care Scholarship Program - Youth Transitioning From Foster Placement to Successful Adulthood Pilot Program – Establishment  
Senate Education, Environment, and Education Committee**

**Position: Favorable**

The Maryland Catholic Conference (MCC) is the public policy representative of the three (arch)dioceses serving Maryland, which together encompass over one million Marylanders. Statewide, their parishes, schools, hospitals, and numerous charities combine to form our state's second largest social service provider network, behind only our state government.

**Senate Bill 687** establishes the Youth Transitioning From Foster Placement to Successful Adulthood Pilot Program in the Child Care Scholarship Program to assist foster youth in applying for and accessing subsidies in the Program; establishing that the duration of the program is from January 1, 2026, until December 31, 2028; and requiring the State Department of Education to report on the status and an evaluation of the Pilot Program's goals to the General Assembly on or before December 1 of each year of the Pilot Program.

The Child Care Scholarship Program (CCSP) in Maryland provides financial assistance to eligible families, helping them afford high-quality childcare and early education programs.<sup>1</sup> For foster youth, guardians receive CCSP funds to support their care. However, once these young individuals age out of the foster system, they may face barriers in accessing financial assistance programs that could help them navigate life independently. This legislation seeks to identify and address these gaps, ensuring that youth aging out of the system are not left without essential support. The proposed pilot program would assess and remove obstacles that prevent former foster youth from receiving extended financial assistance through CCSP.

Young adults aging out of foster care face a heightened risk of chronic poverty. By age 18—or 21 in some jurisdictions—these individuals lose the structured support of the state, often without a reliable safety net to guide them into adulthood. Of the 20,000 young adults who exit

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<sup>1</sup> <https://earlychildhood.marylandpublicschools.org/child-care-providers/child-care-scholarship-program>

foster care each year, an estimated 97% immediately experience chronic poverty.<sup>2</sup> The instability of transitioning out of foster care, coupled with economic hardships, increases their vulnerability to financial insecurity.

The principles of subsidiarity and solidarity call for upholding fundamental human rights, including access to food, housing, medical care, and essential social services.<sup>3</sup> This pilot program would help bridge the gap in services for youth transitioning into adulthood, ensuring they are not left behind due to a sudden loss of resources. By providing continued support, this legislation would empower them to become self-sufficient, contributing members of their communities.

For these reasons, the Maryland Catholic Conference asks for an unfavorable report on **SB 687**.

Thank you for your consideration.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.frothers.com/freedom-from-chronic-poverty/#:~:text=For%20young%20adults%20aging%20out,stability%20provided%20by%20the%20state.>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.usccb.org/news/2023/world-day-poor-be-poor-those-you-serve-pope-says>

# **SEIU Local 500 - SB687 - Support.pdf**

Uploaded by: Elly Colmers

Position: FAV



Hearing Testimony March 5, 2025  
Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee  
Service Employees International Union, Local 500

SB687

Child Care Scholarship Program - Youth Transitioning From Foster Placement to Successful Adulthood  
Pilot Program - Establishment

SUPPORT

SEIU Local 500 represents over 20,000 working people in Maryland, Washington D.C., and Virginia. Our union represents the support staff at the Montgomery County Public School system, Family Child Care Providers, Faculty and Staff at several Maryland colleges and universities, staff at non-profits and many other working people across the region. We urge a FAVORABLE Report on SB687 – Child Care Scholarship Program - Youth Transitioning From Foster Placement to Successful Adulthood Pilot Program - Establishment.

Senate Bill 687 establishes the Youth Transitioning From Foster Placement to Successful Adulthood Pilot Program within the Child Care Scholarship Program. This legislation is a vital step toward supporting young adults who are aging out of foster care, a population that faces unique challenges as they transition to independent adulthood.

The transition from foster care to self-sufficiency is an incredibly difficult period, often marked by limited financial resources, housing instability, and a lack of access to critical services, such as affordable child care. By removing unnecessary application barriers—such as requiring proof of employment, education enrollment, or information about a non-resident parent—this bill ensures that young parents in foster care can access child care assistance when they need it most. These common bureaucratic hurdles too often delay or prevent access to necessary support, at a time when stability is essential for success.

Investing in this program is an investment in the future of Maryland's youth and workforce. By providing financial support for child care services, SB687 enables young adults to pursue education and employment opportunities, which is essential to breaking cycles of poverty and instability. Reliable child care is not just a basic need; it is a crucial enabler of long-term economic independence. The ability to access care allows young parents to focus on their education or career path, giving them a better chance to succeed in the workforce and contribute meaningfully to their communities.

Furthermore, the pilot program included in this bill offers an opportunity to create a forward-thinking model for long-term support. It allows Maryland to refine its approach based on real-world data, ultimately enhancing the well-being of vulnerable youth who are too often overlooked. The lessons learned from this pilot can be used to craft policies that further improve the outcomes for foster youth and ensure they receive the support they need to thrive.

Maryland must support its most vulnerable young adults as they age out of the foster care system. Without such targeted interventions, many of these youth face a grim future of homelessness, economic hardship, and continued instability, and reaffirms Maryland's commitment to ensuring that every young person aging out of foster care has the support they need to successfully transition into adulthood. SB687 is a necessary and compassionate measure that provides these young people with the resources they need to build stable, successful futures.

Therefore, we request a favorable report on Senate Bill 687, as it represents an investment in the futures of Maryland's most vulnerable youth.

## **Support of SB0687 - JCC.pdf**

Uploaded by: Jalene Chase

Position: FAV

# REV. DR. JALENE C. CHASE

6200 Heston Terrace Lanham, Maryland 20706

Cell) 301-325-6676

Email: [revjchase@gmail.com](mailto:revjchase@gmail.com)

March 3, 2025

SB0687- Child Care Scholarship Program- Youth Transitioning from Foster Placement to Successful Adulthood Pilot Program-Establishment: Senate – Education, Energy, and Environment

## POSITION: SUPPORT

Dear Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

**As a certified Therapeutic Foster Care and Kinship Care Parent and Retired Pastor in the United Methodist Church, I strongly support SB0687.** Given the current political climate's uncertainty about employment, education, and work/school-life balance, we need to support young parents. As decision-makers, we want to help the next generation increase their chances of success, and this bill has the potential to do that.

As a Foster Parent, I had a teen mother in my care. Her goal was to secure a stable future for herself and her child, but she needed childcare and monetary assistance. She was hesitant to ask, but she knew that attending school and securing a job for childcare would increase the possibility of a better life for her child. Dropping out of school to care for her child was not a good option for their future. Not every foster parent/family is able to financially assist or provide childcare, nor be willing to sign paperwork that requires their personal information.

The voucher requires the young mother to identify the baby's father. Working with Foster Care and as a Pastor, I know that circumstances surrounding conception were not always mutual or consensual. Do we need to further traumatize the young mothers who are survivors of those situations? Can't we acknowledge their decision to continue with the pregnancy and parent without that information?

Having a sense of accomplishment does wonders for a person's self-esteem, especially for children in care and single parents. Transitioning to Adulthood Programs using resources that they secured will encourage them. Securing funding without feeling that they are a strain on the household helps them help their child. SB0687 may motivate a young parent who was already displaced from their family to find their footing as they build a family and navigate their situation, a situation most people do not understand or comprehend.

Please pass this bill. They face challenges and stereotypes that sometimes affect their quality of life. Your affirmative vote will plant seeds of support and security now that will grow these young people's confidence and character in the future as they parent the next potential leaders of our communities, county, state, and nation,

I look forward to a favorable report on SB0687, which will translate into favorable assistance for single parents and their children.

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. Dr. Jalene C. Chase



A Committed Therapeutic Foster Parent  
Retired Pastor, United Methodist Church

# **SB 687- LWVMD- FAV- Child Care Scholarship Program**

Uploaded by: Nora Miller Smith

Position: FAV



**TESTIMONY TO THE SENATE EDUCATION, ENERGY, AND THE ENVIRONMENT  
COMMITTEE**

**SB 687: Child Care Scholarship Program- Youth Transitioning From Foster Placement  
to Successful Adulthood Pilot Program- Establishment**

**POSITION: Support**

**BY: Linda Kohn, President**

**DATE: March 5, 2025**

The League of Women Voters believes that one of the goals of social policy in the United States should be to promote self-sufficiency for individuals and families, and that **the most effective social programs are those designed to prevent or reduce poverty. It has also long recognized that child care programs are a key supportive service for families in need, as they increase parental access to education, job training, and employment.**

**The League thus supports Senate Bill 687**, which would create a pilot program to assist transition-age youth secure affordable, quality child care via the Child Care Scholarship program. **Access to this quality child care would also help ensure the health, well-being and safety of the children of those transition-age youth.**

Many young people easing into independence and adulthood rely on their families for financial assistance and guidance. Families can support their children's transition to adulthood by perhaps allowing them to live at home while completing their education, or by helping with child care. Young people aging out of foster care do not have those options. When state support abruptly ends, they are suddenly expected to be self-sufficient and able to pay for housing, food, transportation, child care, and other basic needs on their own. As a Washington Post article<sup>1</sup> noted: "It's jarring to imagine what happens to kids who are simply evicted into adulthood."

**The child care assistance provided in Senate Bill 687 would help alleviate some of the instability and danger of this period of transition for youth aging out of foster care and their children.** It would help bridge the gap between foster care and self-sufficiency, helping those vulnerable young people better care for themselves and their children as they transition to successful adulthood.

**The League urges the committee to give a favorable report to Senate Bill 687.**

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2024/02/08/foster-care-graduates-ongoing-support/>

## **SB0687\_FAV\_DHS.pdf**

Uploaded by: Rachel Sledge Government Affairs

Position: FAV



DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

Wes Moore, Governor · Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor · Rafael López, Secretary

March 5, 2025

The Honorable Brian J. Feldman, Chair  
Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee  
2 West Miller Senate Office Building  
11 Bladen St.  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

**RE: TESTIMONY ON SB 687 - CHILD CARE SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM - YOUTH  
TRANSITIONING FROM FOSTER PLACEMENT TO SUCCESSFUL ADULTHOOD PILOT  
PROGRAM - ESTABLISHMENT - POSITION: FAVORABLE**

Dear Chair Feldman and Members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee:

The Maryland Department of Human Services (DHS) thanks the Committee for its consideration and respectfully requests a favorable report for Senate Bill 687 (SB 687).

With offices in every one of Maryland's jurisdictions, DHS provides preventative and supportive services, economic assistance, and meaningful connections to employment development and career opportunities to assist Marylanders in reaching their full potential. Our Social Services Administration (SSA) implements the Older Youth program serving youth in our care who would greatly benefit from SB 687. DHS is committed to a future in which all youth in our care receive the support they need to achieve self-sufficiency and transition successfully into adulthood.

SB 687 would achieve two key goals of the Moore-Miller administration: reducing childhood poverty and providing comprehensive support for youth who have experienced foster care. SB 687 would advance these goals for the youth in our care by reducing barriers to independence and providing additional support when they transition to living independently.

The absence of child care is a barrier to pursuing educational and employment opportunities for pregnant and parenting youth in foster care. Pregnant and parenting foster youth need affordable child care to look for and pursue employment and



education opportunities. Through no fault of their own, youth in care are frequently separated from families who could otherwise provide temporary child care while a young parent seeks work or educational opportunities. SB 687 would remove the barrier to accessible child care for pregnant and parenting youth in out-of-home care as they transition to adulthood by authorizing earlier access to the [Child Care Scholarship Program](#) (CCSP). SB 687 would enable youth in care and those transitioning out of care to apply for CCSP without requiring proof of employment, enrollment in education or career programs, and without the name of and written authorization from the other parent. Removing the child care barrier to employment and education could interrupt generational experiences in foster care. Research demonstrates that economic distress and income instability may increase likelihood of child maltreatment due to lack of resources and sudden change or volatility in a family's economic situation. Removing the child care barrier for youth in our care helps to stabilize the young family's economic foundation.

Research also demonstrates that the lack of access to child care increases the risk for child neglect. In fact, the lack of access to child care is a stronger predictor of child neglect than mental health. Pregnant and parenting youth are frequently unable to afford child care, which creates a significant barrier to independence. As of February 2025, the Economic Policy Institute ranked Maryland 11th out of all states and state equivalents for our cost of infant care, averaging nearly \$19,000 annually per child.<sup>1</sup> DHS has limited resources to assist youth in our care with the cost of child care when transitioning to adulthood. The Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA) authorizes federal funds to support pregnant and parenting youth with preventative services, such as mental health resources and in-home skill-based programs. However, FFPSA funding alone does not completely cover the cost of child care in Maryland, and this is where access to the CCSP is critical. Prioritizing child care to support the parenting youth in our care is investing in child safety and well-being.

The existing requirements to qualify for CCSP work against the youth in our care from accessing the scholarship. Many pregnant or parenting youth would need reliable and safe child care to attend a job interview or commit to a work or school schedule. Child care must come first. With early access to reliable child care, SB 687 would remove the fear of young parents that they would have to quit an opportunity simply because they are unable to arrange child care after saying "yes." Removing the burden of proving employment or enrollment in order to access CCSP enables young parents to job hunt, maintain employment, and pursue higher education or career training. Pregnant and parenting youth in our care should have priority access to the child care scholarship for their children, providing the essential support for child safety, and establishing

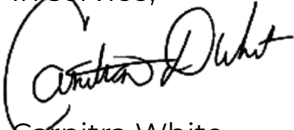
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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.epi.org/child-care-costs-in-the-united-states/#/MD>

self-sufficiency and a successful transition to adulthood. Lack of access to child care should not be a barrier for the youth in our care and their children.

We appreciate the opportunity to offer favorable testimony to the Committee for consideration during your deliberations. The Maryland State Department of Education administers the Child Care Scholarship and we appreciate their collaboration and partnership in serving our customers. If you require additional information, please contact Rachel Sledge, Director of Government Affairs, at [rachel.sledge@maryland.gov](mailto:rachel.sledge@maryland.gov).

In service,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Carnitra White", written over a large, stylized capital letter "C".

Carnitra White  
Principal Deputy Secretary

# **SB 0687 2025.pdf**

Uploaded by: Robert Basler

Position: FAV



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### **SB0687- Child Care Scholarship Program - Youth Transitioning From Foster Placement to Successful Adulthood Pilot Program - Establishment**

#### **Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee POSITION: SUPPORT**

Dear Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,  
On behalf of Arrow Child & Family Ministries, we are writing to express our unwavering support for House Bill 1121, a critical piece of legislation that would begin to address one of the barriers older youths in foster care can face in being successful.

Young adults in foster care who “age out of care”, in other words, reach the age of 21 while residing in foster care, face significant hurdles to be successful in adulthood. Young people who age out of foster care are more likely to experience hardships such as homelessness, joblessness, early parenthood and substance use. For foster youth who are also parents, these risks are even higher. To help address this, the Social Services Administration operates Ready by 21 programing to support the development of independent living skills. Some youth are placed in Treatment Foster Care or Independent Living Programs licensed to place foster youth who are parents. Despite these resources, this is still a group of young people at very high risk for the above mentioned negative outcomes. The Annie E Casey Foundation estimates the economic impact of young people aging out of care and failing to keep pace with their general population peers: about \$4.1 billion for each new group of youth aging out of foster care.

Data on how many foster youth are also parents does not seem to be publicly available, nor is data on how many youth are placed in Treatment Foster Care or Independent Living Programs licensed to place foster youth who are parents. . However, providers who work with these youth report that access to child care is a significant barrier to consistent employment and educational completion, whether that be high school or college. At this time, we have anecdotal evidence of some of the barriers. These include the requirement that the applicant must be “working or employed in an approved training program or attending school,” and the requirement of including the other parent’s information in the application, especially in situations of domestic violence or simply fear of losing custody.

It has been asked why this requires legislation and why the youths’ social workers or foster parents don’t just provide more help to the youth. Our response is that these people are helping the youth and if the youth is running into barriers that can best be addressed systemically, that is what should be done. It is also why we support a pilot program. This will allow time for evaluation of the issues and solutions to be

experimented with and will allow data to be collected and used to ensure interventions are effective.

Youth who age out of foster care are some of the highest risk of any young people for negative outcomes. HB 1121 addresses one small barrier to the success for one, very high risk, subset of these youth. But by building supports, even one small step at a time, is how we make progress and we have a lot of progress to make. Therefore, I urge the committee to support HB 1121.

Thank you.

Robert Basler, LCSW-C

Associate Vice President

Arrow Child & Family Ministries



## **SB 687**

Uploaded by: Senator Benson Senator Benson

Position: FAV



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

MAJORITY WHIP

Budget and Taxation Committee

*Subcommittees*

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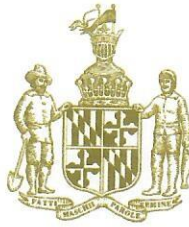
Audit and Evaluation Committee

Children, Youth, and Families

Ending Homelessness

Fair Practices and

State Personnel Oversight



THE SENATE OF MARYLAND  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

James Senate Office Building  
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**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



# **SB687\_Caseworker\_FAV.pdf**

Uploaded by: Therese Hessler

Position: FAV

March 3, 2025



SB 687 - Child Care Scholarship Program - Youth Transitioning from Foster Placement to Successful Adulthood Pilot Program – Establishment

Senate Ways and Means Committee

POSITION: SUPPORT

Dear Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of CONCERN Professional Services, I am writing to express my unwavering support for Senate Bill 687. I have worked as a caseworker for over 20 years. In those years, I've assisted numerous young moms in navigating the Child Care Scholarship Application. When people ask me about the most frustrating parts of my job, this one always comes to mind. It is terribly discouraging for young moms to have to work or go to school for several weeks in order to have the necessary paperwork to prove that there is a need for childcare assistance. Who will watch their child at that time? This is in addition to often running into other barriers such as providing documentation from the child's father, who often does not want to cooperate, is providing child support in an informal arrangement, or may not be a safe person with whom to co-parent. I can also recall clients who kept experiencing problems and delays with the processing of their application, including one who somehow had a child assigned to her case who wasn't her child. It took months of phone calls and emails from the two of us to get this corrected. As a result of having so much difficulty and it is taking so much time to process their applications, moms will often lose the slots in the daycare that they have chosen, or they lose that job and must start the process all over again. Starting all over again includes not only having to find a new job but also having to obtain more weeks of documentation to support their application. As everyone knows, the more jobs you lose the harder it is to obtain stable employment.

According to The National Foster Youth Institute, approximately 25% of former foster youth will experience homelessness within four years of emancipating from the foster care system, and 50% of the homeless population nationwide spent time in the foster care system. Although ideas about how to reduce the number of unhoused citizens differ by political party, everyone agrees that it is an important issue to tackle. What if by providing easier access to childcare you could make a difference in reducing these numbers in Maryland? What if by providing easier access to childcare you could place parents on a strong foundation that enabled them to further their education and have well-paid employment? What if by doing this you gave hope to parents to be able to provide stable housing for themselves and their children? What if by removing the current barriers you supported parents breaking the cycles of poverty, trauma, and parental stresses that perpetuate the need for foster care? I believe that your support of SB687 will indeed be an investment in the futures of some of your most vulnerable constituents. I am asking that you support SB687.

Sincerely,

*Helena Santos-Collins*

Helena Santos-Collins, MSW, LCSW-C  
Caseworker/Family Worker

# **SB687\_KB\_FAV.pdf**

Uploaded by: Therese Hessler

Position: FAV

March 3, 2025

House Ways & Means Committee

HB1221 - Child Care Scholarship Program - Youth Transitioning From Foster Placement to Successful Adulthood Pilot Program - Establishment

Position: SUPPORT

Hello,

Please allow me share my experiences with teen moms trying to better themselves by completing their high school education, higher education and employment.

I have been a CONCERN foster parent for many years. My experience with the young moms attempting to get child care vouchers is that they are met with many road blocks which in many cases they become discouraged and decide not to proceed. The result is the young mother not pursuing higher education or employment and relying on the system for their livelihood.

The requirements in my humble opinion are not conducive for the teen moms being motivated to strive for more. They cannot apply for vouchers unless they have a schedule set in place. The majority of foster parents have careers, therefore, cannot care for the young mother's children/babies during the day. I always encourage the young moms to go to college or seek employment. However, the current requirements are that the mom submit their current schedule when applying for childcare vouchers. My personal experience is that they are not attending school or have employment due to not having childcare, therefore, they do not have a schedule.

Also, the foster parent is required to submit personal financial information. I am not willing to do that. Although, I want to help the young moms, unfortunately, from past experiences, you never know when the relationship will suddenly change and the young mom and baby leave your home. Therefore, I am not comfortable or willing to submit my personal information.

It is my hope that there can be some type of exception for teen moms in foster care who may not meet the current requirements.

Respectfully,

Kimberly Bagley

## **SB687\_MARFY\_FAV.pdf**

Uploaded by: Therese Hessler

Position: FAV



March 5, 2025

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

**Senate Education, Energy, & Environment Committee**

**Position: FAVORABLE**

On behalf of the Maryland Association of Resources for Families and Youth (MARFY), we respectfully submit this testimony in strong support of Senate Bill 687 (SB 687). MARFY represents a coalition of private child-caring organizations that provide foster care, group homes, and independent living programs for Maryland's most vulnerable children—those placed out of their homes due to abuse, neglect, severe mental health conditions, or complex medical needs. Our more than 200 programs statewide are committed to providing stable, supportive, and high-quality care for children in need.

This legislation establishes the *Youth Transitioning From Foster Placement to Successful Adulthood Pilot Program* within the Child Care Scholarship Program, ensuring that young adults aging out of foster care receive critical financial support for child care services. The transition from foster care to independent adulthood is fraught with challenges, including limited access to financial resources, housing instability, and difficulties securing child care while pursuing employment or education.

The bill removes unnecessary application hurdles, such as requiring proof of employment, education enrollment, or information about the non-resident parent. These barriers often prevent young parents from accessing child care assistance at a time when stability is most needed.

Investing in the passage of SB 687 is an investment in Maryland's future. By equipping foster youth with the resources necessary to achieve economic independence, this bill fosters a stronger, more self-sufficient workforce. Ensuring access to reliable child care empowers young parents to pursue education and career opportunities, breaking cycles of poverty and instability. Moreover, the pilot program establishes a forward-thinking model for long-term support, allowing Maryland to refine its approach and implement data-driven policies that enhance the well-being of vulnerable youth. Strengthening the foundation for foster youth today creates a more resilient and prosperous Maryland for generations to come.

Maryland has a duty to support its most vulnerable young adults as they age out of the foster care system. Without targeted interventions, many of these youth face homelessness, economic hardship, and continued cycles of instability. SB 687 is a necessary and compassionate investment in their futures.



We ask the committee to vote favorable on Senate Bill 687 and reaffirm Maryland's commitment to ensuring that every foster youth has the support needed to successfully transition into adulthood.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

**For more information call or email:**

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# **SB0687- State Board- SWA.pdf**

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Position: FWA



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**TO:** Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

**BILL:** SB 687 - Child Care Scholarship Program - Youth Transitioning from Foster Placement to Successful Adulthood Pilot Program

**DATE:** March 5, 2025

**POSITION:** Letter of Support w/Amendments

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**Chair Feldman and Members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee:**

Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) and the State Board of Education support Senate Bill (SB) 687 - Child Care Scholarship Program - Youth Transitioning from Foster Placement to Successful Adulthood Pilot Program – Establishment with amendments. This legislation proposes to establish the Youth Transitioning from Foster Placement to Successful Adulthood Pilot Program in the Child Care Scholarship (CCS) Program.

Helping low-income families gain access to high-quality child care is MSDE's CCS program's primary focus. MSDE recognizes that when a family has reliable and trustworthy child care, parents can better focus on employment and/or educational attainment, which could then lead to a healthier family dynamic that fosters independence. Furthermore, when Maryland families succeed at obtaining and maintaining employment, it impacts the stabilization of the statewide economy.

The Department of Human Services (DHS) shares the same overarching goal in support of independence as it relates to assisting foster youth within their pre-established Youth Transition to Adulthood Program. DHS executed the transitional youth program to equip participants with necessary life skills, while assisting them in attaining educational assistance, housing, and employment, so that they successfully transition into independent adulthood. Coincidentally, some of the participants in DHS's program also have children that require child care services as well, to support their active participation in programs that will maintain their independence. Hence, DHS pays for the child care services of the foster youth participants' children while they are enrolled in the program.

Essentially, SB 687 proposes that the CCS program establish a Youth Transitioning from Foster Placement to Successful Adulthood Pilot Program to assist fostered youth (with children) with the cost of child care as they participate in a youth transitional program just like the one that DHS currently executes and financially supports. While MSDE is in support of the overall intent behind the bill, the agency considers this service duplicative. Therefore, the agency suggests eliminating the pilot program responsibilities and requirements intended for the MSDE's CCS program as stipulated in the bill, allowing DHS to continue to execute all foster care and transitional youth support services.

Moreover, the CCS program is designed to assist families engaged in an approved activity (proof of working or attending school or training) with the cost of child care until their income exceeds 85% of the State Median Income. The CCS program does not currently have a system in place to provide

additional support services should a participant fall short of meeting that mandate. MSDE anticipates that participants would be at risk of falling through a “proverbial crack” due to the lack of such a system and establishing a system to track those who are not engaged in an approved activity would require costly modifications and upgrades to the Child Care Scholarship portal currently in place.

In closing, MSDE recommends amending SB 687 to ensure DHS’s continuance in carrying out the already pre-established programmatic services, and include a stipulation that requires setting up a referral program, which would enable the transition of child care payments from DHS to the CCS Program without a break in service, as long as the family’s income is below 85% of the State Median Income and the child is enrolled in a CCS approved program at the time of transferring benefits. MSDE believes the suggested modifications to SB 687 would then allow the continued success of DHS’s youth transitioning to adulthood services, while eliminating the need for a new pilot program to accomplish the overall objective of the bill.

We request that the committee consider this information as it deliberates **SB 687**. Please contact Dr. Akilah Alleyne, Executive Director of Government Affairs, at [Akilah.alleyne@maryland.gov](mailto:Akilah.alleyne@maryland.gov) or at 410-767-0504, if you would like any additional information.