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Budget and Taxation Committee  
Chair, Capital Budget Subcommittee

Chair, Senate Democratic Caucus

**THE SENATE OF MARYLAND**  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

**Testimony of Senator Craig J. Zucker**  
**Senate Bill 765- Out-of-Home Placement Providers - Maximum Number of Children -**  
**Exemption**  
**March 4<sup>th</sup>, 2025**  
**1:00pm**  
**Position: Favorable**

Good afternoon, Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and distinguished members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee. It is my pleasure to testify today in **support of Senate Bill 765- Out-of-Home Placement Providers - Maximum Number of Children - Exemption**. I would like to thank the co-sponsors, Chair Smith, Vice-Chair Waldstreicher, and Senators Folden and Gallion.

Currently, our state imposes bed caps on foster care homes, limiting the number of children a home can house at any given time. These caps have created an unintended barrier for foster youth by forcing them to make the choice between education and housing stability. A sense of home and belonging is crucial for all college students, but for foster youth, this is not always guaranteed. Unfortunately, we have encountered a situation where a foster youth declined a college acceptance letter specifically because they feared losing their placement in their foster home.

When foster youth attend college, they need a place to return during breaks, holidays, and institutional closures. Under current regulations, if their foster family reaches maximum capacity with new placements, these students must find alternative housing arrangements. This uncertainty leads to housing instability and can cause disruptions in education for students already navigating the complexities of higher education with fewer support systems than their peers.

SB 765 creates an exemption for foster youth enrolled in an institution of higher education from bed cap regulations specifically during scheduled breaks, temporary closures of the institution, and approved leaves of absence when both the student and foster family agree to this arrangement. This ensures housing stability during critical periods when students most need a place to call home and removes a significant barrier to educational advancement.

We have been working with the Maryland Department of Human Services to draft amendments to align the bill with recent regulatory changes. We will share these finalized updates with the Committee for consideration.

**I respectfully urge a favorable report on SB 765.** Thank you for your consideration.