

State Council on Child Abuse and Neglect (SCCAN)



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Oral Testimony: House Bill 915

Position: Favorable

Good afternoon, Chair and members of the Committee. My name is Ted Gallo , and I am the Executive Director of the State Council on Child Abuse and Neglect (SCCAN).

As an advisory body mandated by Maryland Family Law Article § 5-7A, SCCAN is charged with making recommendations to the Governor and General Assembly on the prevention and treatment of child abuse and neglect. **House Bill 915** aligns perfectly with this mission by establishing a dedicated Workgroup on Aging Out of Foster Care to identify the resources necessary for these vulnerable young adults to achieve self-sufficiency.

Our Council understands that the transition to adulthood is a high-risk period where the lack of stable housing, food security, and healthcare can lead to the very types of neglect and exploitation our organization works to prevent. By bringing together a diverse group of stakeholders—including 15 young people who have lived experience in the system—this bill ensures that Maryland's policy recommendations are grounded in reality.

I would like to specifically highlight Section (d) of the bill, which designates SCCAN to provide the staffing for this Workgroup. We welcome this responsibility. Providing the administrative and research support for this group will allow SCCAN to deepen our "recommendations on policy and training needs" by directly facilitating the study of:

- The effectiveness of current resources;
- Successful programs like hotlines or support lines; and
- The circumstances surrounding the removal of youth from their home counties.

By synthesizing this data into a comprehensive report by June 1, 2027, SCCAN and this Workgroup will provide this body with a roadmap to strengthen our child protection framework. We believe that providing a bridge for youth aging out of care is a fundamental component of lifelong neglect prevention.

For these reasons, the SCCAN urges a **favorable report** on House Bill 915.