



BRANDON M. SCOTT
MAYOR

*Office of Government Relations
88 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401*

HB 0628

March 10, 2026

TO: Members of the House Appropriations Committee

FROM: Brandon M. Scott, Mayor of Baltimore City

RE: HB 0628 -Human Services - Universal Basic Income for Transition-Age Youth Program - Establishment

POSITION: FAVORABLE

Chair Barnes, Vice Chair Kaiser, and Members of the Committee, please be advised that I **support** House Bill (HB) 0628.

I write in strong support of House Bill 628, which would establish the Universal Basic Income for Transition-Age Youth Program within the Maryland Department of Human Services. As Mayor of Baltimore and Co-Chair of Mayors for a Guaranteed Income (MGI), I have seen firsthand how guaranteed income transforms the lives of our most vulnerable residents, and I urge the Committee to give this bill a favorable report.

Each year, more than 15,000 young people in the United States age out of the foster care system without the family support network that most of us rely on during the critical transition to adulthood. The consequences are severe: Research shows that between 31 and 46 percent of these young people experience homelessness by age 26; they are significantly more likely to face unemployment and incarceration; and fewer than 12 percent earn a postsecondary degree by their mid-twenties, compared to 49 percent of the general population. Maryland can and must do better for these young people.

In Baltimore, we have seen the proven impact of guaranteed income programs firsthand, with the success of the Baltimore Young Families Success Fund (BYFSF). Through this pilot initiative, my administration invested \$4.8 million to provide 200 young parents, ages 18–24, with \$1,000 per month over 24 months. The independently evaluated results, conducted by Abt Associates and Johns Hopkins University showed that participants were more than twice as likely as their peers to pursue education or professional training, experienced increased financial stability and greater food security, moved into stable housing at higher rates, missed fewer hours of work, and reported reduced stress and a greater sense of purpose and belonging.

These findings are consistent with evaluations from more than 72 guaranteed income pilots across 26 states, backed by over \$335 million in direct economic relief, showing that guaranteed income helps families stabilize, access better employment, and invest in their long-term futures. Guaranteed income is now a proven concept, which is why there are currently more than 20 bills in 11 states proposing statewide guaranteed income programs, with at least 65 additional bills in another 15 states advancing similar cash-based policies. Over half the states in the country are now considering some form of guaranteed income legislation, building on the strong evidence base that pilots like Baltimore's have generated.

I'm grateful to Del. Gabriel Acevero, a member of Legislators for a Guaranteed Income, for introducing House Bill 628 which would bring this same evidence-based approach to one of Maryland's most at-risk populations. By providing guaranteed income to transition-age youth aging out of foster care, the state would offer a dignified, effective response to the structural economic insecurity these young people face at precisely the moment when intervention matters most.

Additionally, HB 628 ensures that program payments will not be counted as income or resources for purposes of determining eligibility for other public benefits. This critical provision prevents the benefits cliff that too often undermines the progress of participants in assistance programs and ensures that young people can accept this support without losing access to healthcare, food assistance, or other vital services they need during this transition.

The evidence is clear: Guaranteed income works. Baltimore has proven it locally, and 72 pilots nationally confirm it. As Co-Chair of MGI, a national network of over 250 current and former elected officials, I have worked alongside mayors, county commissioners, and now state legislators across the country to advance this policy solution. Maryland has an opportunity to lead at the state level, demonstrating that guaranteed income is not just a local experiment but a scalable, effective tool for economic security.

I respectfully urge the Committee to make a **favorable** report on HB 628, a meaningful step toward ensuring that no young person in Maryland is left without economic security simply because they aged out of a system that was meant to protect them.