



**TESTIMONY FOR HB0628 – Human Services – Universal Basic Income for Transition-Age Youth Program – Establishment – FAVORABLE**

**Bill Sponsor: Delegates Acevero, Addison, Alston, Bhandari, Chang, Fennell, Foley, Forbes, Griffith, Hornberger, Ivey, S. Johnson, Martinez, Mireku-North, Roberson, Ruff, Spiegel, Terrasa, Turner, Williams, Wilson, Woods, and Woorman**

**Committee: Appropriations**

**Organization Submitting: Maryland Legislative Coalition**

**Person Submitting: Jessica Gorski, Executive Committee**

**Position: FAVORABLE**

Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

**My name is Jessica Gorski, and I am submitting this testimony in strong support of HB0628 on behalf of the Maryland Legislative Coalition.** We are a statewide coalition of grassroots organizations representing more than 30,000 Marylanders across every legislative district. Our mission is rooted in the belief that government must protect people’s lives, health, and dignity, especially for young people transitioning out of the out-of-home placement system, who face some of the steepest barriers to stability, economic security, and long-term wellbeing.

**HB0628 establishes the Universal Basic Income for Transition-Age Youth Program within the Department of Human Services.** The program provides unconditional monthly cash payments to individuals aging out of out-of-home placement. It ensures that these payments cannot be counted as income or resources when determining eligibility for other benefits. **This protection is essential, as it prevents young adults from being penalized for receiving support intended to help them achieve stability.**

These supports are not theoretical; they are urgently needed.

**Transition-age youth often enter adulthood without the financial safety nets, family support, or community resources that many of their peers rely on. They face disproportionately high rates of housing instability, unemployment, food insecurity, and gaps in healthcare access.** A guaranteed, unconditional income provides a foundation that allows young adults to meet basic needs, pursue education or employment, and build the stability required for long-term success.

## **How HB0628 Improves Access to Healthcare**

Economic security is directly tied to health outcomes. For transition-age youth, even small financial shocks can result in missed medical appointments, inability to pay for transportation, lapses in access to medication, or delays in enrolling in health coverage. HB0628 strengthens healthcare access in several critical ways:

- Unconditional income reduces financial barriers to care. Young adults can use funds for transportation to medical appointments, copays, over-the-counter medications, and other essential health-related expenses that are often out of reach.
- Payments are not counted as income for benefit eligibility. This ensures that youth do not lose access to Medicaid, behavioral health services, or other critical programs because they receive modest financial support.
- Economic stability supports mental and behavioral health. Transition-age youth experience higher rates of trauma, depression, and anxiety. Financial insecurity compounds these challenges. A predictable income reduces stress and supports engagement with treatment and preventive care.
- Stable resources improve continuity of care. When young adults can maintain housing, transportation, and basic needs, they are far more likely to stay connected to primary care, behavioral health providers, and community-based services.

In short, HB0628 does more than provide financial support; it strengthens the foundation necessary for young adults to access and maintain healthcare, which is essential for long-term stability and well-being.

This bill reflects Maryland's commitment to equity, dignity, and opportunity. It recognizes that young people aging out of state systems deserve the same chance at a healthy, stable adulthood as any other Marylander. By providing unconditional income and protecting eligibility for essential benefits, HB0628 advances public health, economic mobility, and long-term community wellbeing.

**No young person should enter adulthood without the resources needed to survive, thrive, and access healthcare. HB0628 provides a fair, compassionate, and evidence-based approach to supporting transition-age youth at a pivotal moment in their lives.**

Thank you for your time and consideration. **We respectfully urge a FAVORABLE report on HB0628.**

Jessica Gorski  
Executive Committee  
Maryland Legislative Coalition