



MARYLAND
CATHOLIC
CONFERENCE

March 19, 2026

House Bill 915
Workgroup on Aging Out of Foster Care
House Appropriations 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.

House Bill 915 establishes the Workgroup on Aging Out of Foster Care to identify the types of resources available for youth who have aged out of foster care to help them achieve self-sufficiency, determine the effectiveness of currently available resources and identify the challenges with current services and programs offered before a youth ages out of the system; and requiring the Workgroup to submit a report of its findings and recommendations by July 1, 2027, to the General Assembly.

When young people age out of foster care, they often lose the structured support of the state and may face significant barriers to accessing housing assistance, education support, employment services, and healthcare. Without coordinated guidance, many struggle to navigate adulthood independently. This legislation seeks to identify and address those service gaps so that youth are not left without critical support at the moment they age out of foster care.

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 foster care each year, an estimated 97% immediately experience chronic poverty.¹ The instability of transitioning out of foster care, coupled with economic hardships, increases their vulnerability to financial insecurity.

¹ <https://www.forothers.com/freedom-from-chronic-poverty/#:~:text=For%20young%20adults%20aging%20out,stability%20provided%20by%20the%20state.>

The principles of subsidiarity and solidarity call for upholding fundamental human rights, including access to food, housing, medical care, and essential social services.² Establishing this Workgroup is a practical step toward strengthening those supports. By evaluating existing programs and recommending improvements, the legislation aims to create a more stable transition to adulthood—helping former foster youth build independence, achieve self-sufficiency, and become thriving members of their communities.

For these reasons, the Maryland Catholic Conference asks for a favorable report on **HB 915**.

Thank you for your consideration.

² <https://www.usccb.org/news/2023/world-day-poor-be-poor-those-you-serve-pope-says>