



**DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES**

*Wes Moore, Governor · Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor · Gloria Brown Burnett, Interim Secretary*

March 19, 2026

The Honorable Ben Barnes, Chair  
House Appropriations Committee  
120 Taylor House Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

**RE: TESTIMONY ON HB 915 - WORKGROUP ON AGING OUT OF FOSTER CARE -  
POSITION: INFORMATION**

Dear Chair Barnes and Members of the Appropriations Committee:

The Maryland Department of Human Services (DHS) thanks the Committee for its consideration and respectfully submits information for House Bill 915 (HB 915).

With offices in every one of Maryland's jurisdictions, DHS provides preventative and supportive services, economic assistance, and meaningful connections to employment development and career opportunities to assist Marylanders in reaching their full potential. Our Social Services Administration implements the Out-of-Home Care program, which is affected by HB 915. HB 915 establishes a short-term Workgroup on Aging Out of Foster Care to review the availability, effectiveness, and gaps in services and supports for youth transitioning out of care in Maryland. The findings from this workgroup will influence the practices, procedures, and policies of DHS programs to support youth aging out of foster care.

Youth who age out of foster care experience disproportionately higher rates of housing insecurity, incarceration, joblessness, and substance abuse than their peers who either are in permanent homes or who were never in foster care. To address these inequities, DHS works with our sister agencies to improve interagency collaboration in support of foster youth. We also created the Emerging Adults Workgroup and the State Youth Advisory Board to ensure foster youth are engaged and empowered.

HB 915 would establish a new Workgroup on Aging Out of Foster Care to assess and report for a period of one year and one month. The findings from the Workgroup could provide further insight into the observed statistics, helping DHS better support youth who age out of foster care. The bill proposes to codify practices that DHS already implements through interagency collaboration, stakeholder engagement, and the

State/Local Youth Advisory Boards. Research finds that [extended, continuous, well-coordinated supports](#) protect youth aging out of care from homelessness and incarceration.

DHS is particularly interested that the workgroup envisioned by HB 915 would include individuals “who are at least 18 years old and under the age of 25 years, who... have aged out of foster care... are currently aging out of foster care; or are members of the Department of Human Services’ Youth Advisory Board.” The opinions and lived experiences of these young people will provide invaluable insights to the workgroup, and we commend their involvement in this process. We might suggest that the General Assembly consider compensating these young people for their time and expertise, as they face economic realities the other participants may not.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide this information to the Committee for consideration during your deliberations. If you require additional information, please contact Justin Hayes, Acting Director of Government Affairs, at [justin.hayes1@maryland.gov](mailto:justin.hayes1@maryland.gov).

In service,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Gloria Brown Burnett". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Gloria Brown Burnett  
Interim Secretary