

Testimony in Support of House Bill 396

Residential Child Care Programs - Education of Children and Training of Child and Youth Care Practitioners

Submitted by:

Saachi Shettar

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Chairwoman Wilkins, Vice Chair Feldmark, and Members of the Ways and Means Committee,

I am Saachi Shettar, a Freshman at Glenelg High School in Howard County. I am writing to respectfully support House Bill 396 and request a favorable report.

As a student who is able to study with structure, get assistance with assignments and test preparation, and receives encouragement to participate in extracurriculars that support my personal interests, I believe it is a huge concern that other students are unable to obtain these same opportunities simply because of their living situation. HB0396 takes an important step toward ensuring that students living in residential child care programs receive consistent academic support and are cared for by trained professionals.

This bill recognizes that education does not stop at the classroom door. By requiring regularly scheduled academic support and appropriate training for child and youth care practitioners, HB0396 helps create a more stable, supportive environment where students can focus on learning and growth. The adults working with these children would have strengthened training due to this bill, equipping them to better handle obstacles in student success.

As an athlete and musician myself, I experience firsthand the benefits and joys that come with having supportive adults in my life that encourage me to pursue my interests and balance it with my schoolwork. I believe every student deserves this presence in their lives to be able to thrive in both educational and extracurricular pursuits.

I believe this legislation promotes true equity and opportunity because when I have faced academic or personal hurdles, I managed to overcome them because of the people who guided and mentored me. HB0396 can help do the same for many more students as it ensures that students in residential child care programs are not left behind academically and are given the tools and support they need to succeed in school and prepare for their future.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the committee to issue a favorable report on House Bill 0396. Thank you for your time and consideration.