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Budget and Taxation Committee

Subcommittees

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THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Testimony of Senator Craig J. Zucker
Senate Bill- 662 – State Child Welfare System - Reporting
Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
February 25th, 2020
12:00pm
Position: SUPPORT

Good afternoon Chairman Smith, Vice Chairman Waldstreicher, and distinguished members of the committee. It is my pleasure to testify today in **support of Senate Bill 662 – State Child Welfare System – Reporting.**

In 2015, we passed legislation that I sponsored requiring the Department of Human Resources (DHR) by December 1st of each year, to report specified information regarding children and foster youth in the State child welfare system to the General Assembly. This legislation modifies the 2015 law, which should be handled with existing resources.

Currently, the Department of Human Services (DHS) releases monthly data and a yearly report with information of children involved with the child welfare system.

This bill requires DHS to report the following:

1. Incidences of abuse or neglect of a child who, in the immediately preceding 24 months, was not removed from their home following an investigation that found indicated or unsubstantiated abuse or neglect
2. The number of children in the custody of a local department or child placement agency who have a sibling in the custody of a different local department of child placement agency
3. The health and mental health care provided, as designated
4. The number of children not enrolled in school for more than one week immediately following a change in placement
5. The number of children in an institution of postsecondary education, apprenticeship, or adult education program.

This legislation requires The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) to publish each annual report on its website and maintain the confidentiality of children and foster youth, ensuring that no personally identifiable information is disclosed. MSDE must disaggregate the information by county, age, gender, race, and ethnicity.

I urge a favorable report on Senate Bill 662. Thank you for your kind consideration.