

THE COALITION TO PROTECT MARYLAND'S CHILDREN

Our Mission: To combine and amplify the power of organizations and citizens working together to keep children safe from abuse and neglect. We strive to secure the budgetary and public policy resources to make meaningful and measurable improvements in safety, permanence, and well-being.

HB216/SB155- Higher Education – Tuition Exemption for Foster Care Recipients and Homeless Youth
Positions: SUPPORT

DATE: 2/3/2021

The Coalition to Protect Maryland's Children (CPMC)¹ is a consortium of Maryland organizations and individuals formed in 1996 to promote meaningful child welfare reform and the prevention of child abuse and neglect.. CPMC supports passage of HB216/SB155- Higher Education – Tuition Exemption for Foster Care Recipients and Homeless Youth

HB216/SB155 improves Maryland's tuition exemption for youth experiencing homelessness in order to provide access to higher education and a pathway out of poverty for talented Maryland students by eliminating the recertification requirement, expanding eligibility to accompanied homeless youth, and creating an appeals process.

Expanding eligibility to accompanied youth experiencing homelessness may impact the fiscal note, however the cost savings to the state exponentially outweighs the cost of the potential fiscal impact. Investing in higher education access for youth experiencing homelessness results in considerable savings and increased revenue to the State over time. For instance, reduced reliance on government benefits and rates of incarceration results in savings to the State, and reduced unemployment and higher earnings result in increased revenue.

In addition, those who graduated college are 3.5 times less likely to impoverished and nearly five times less likely to be imprisoned. In all, lifetime government expenditures are \$82,000 lower for college graduates than for those with high school degrees.^[1]

For the reasons stated above, we urge this committee to issue a favorable report on HB216/SB155 to mitigate existing barriers to accessing higher education for youth experiencing homelessness throughout the state.

^[1] Trostel, Lumina Foundation, "It's Not Just the Money," 2015.

¹ Members in support of SB 155: Advocates for Children and Youth, Associated Catholic Charities, Baltimore Child Abuse Center, Board of Childcare, Child Justice Inc, Citizens Review Board for Children, Court Appointed Special Advocates, The Family Tree, State Council on Child Abuse and Neglect, MD. Chapter of American Academy of Pediatrics, Dianna Phillip, MD Chapter of National Association of Social Workers