



Maryland CASA Association

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To: The Appropriations Committee
From: Meghan Resler, MSW, Assistant Director for Program Services
Re: HB258- State Child Welfare System- Reporting
Date: January 20, 2021
Position: Support

Current Maryland child welfare data show that black youth fare worse than their white peers on every child welfare indicator. Black children are more likely to enter the foster care system, more likely to be placed in a congregate care setting, and less likely to be adopted.ⁱ These inequities can only be eliminated if there is high-quality, transparent, and accessible information to track immediate problems and systemic social determinants which then can guide culturally specific interventions. Meeting the needs of families and children in the child welfare system will require a collaborative approach amongst state agencies including the Department of Human Services and the Maryland State Department of Education.

HB 258 will address gaps in the existing child welfare outcome data released annually by the Department of Human Services (DHS). For example, DHS does not publicly release the stability of mental health services, medication, or the number of youth with an Individualized Education Plan (IEP). HB 258 will require DHS to collect this information and make it publicly available.

HB 258 will also require the Maryland Department of Education (MSDE) to report on the educational outcomes for youth in foster care to include graduation rates, college acceptance rates, school disciplinary data, and IEP data. MSDE already collects several of the data points required by HB258 but the bill will add transparency and accessibility to those efforts by ensuring the data is publicly available.

In order to provide targeted interventions for youth and families in the child welfare system, and specifically address the spanning inequities for the outcomes of black youth, it is imperative that this Committee issues a favorable report on HB258 with amendments.

Thank you for the opportunity to present written testimony. For more information on our position, please contact Meghan Resler, Assistant Director for Program Services at meghan@marylandcasa.org

ⁱ2019 Maryland's Department of Human Services, Child Welfare Indicator Report