

**DATE:** February 12, 2021

**BILL NUMBER:** House Bill 854

**COMMITTEE:** Ways and Means

**BILL TITLE:** Maryland Longitudinal Data System Center - Inclusion of Out-of-Home Placement Data

**DHS POSITION:** Support

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The Department of Human Services (the Department) respectfully offers this letter of support regarding House Bill 854 (HB 854). This bill would require the Department to share certain data with the Maryland Longitudinal Data System Center regarding children in out of home placements, to improve coordination between the State's education and child welfare systems.

HB 854 provides a positive opportunity for Maryland to help with educational planning and attainment for children in foster care. There is currently limited information and data sharing between agencies regarding children in foster care, specifically in the areas of: (1) pre-school and grade school experience, (2) school stability, (3) absenteeism, (4) suspensions, (5) grade status, (6) performance on standardized tests (7) graduation rate or GED attainment (8) the number of foster youth attending a 2 year college; 4 year college; or workforce training program, and a variety of other factors that may predict the educational success of children in foster care.

By having this information available statewide and broken down by jurisdiction, Maryland's local departments of social services will have the information required for effective educational planning. In turn, the ability to plan more effectively may bolster the educational attainment of children in foster care.

Thank you for the opportunity to offer support for HB 854. We ask the committee to give HB 854 a favorable report.