

Education Advocacy Coalition

for Students with Disabilities

APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

HOUSE BILL 108: HUMAN SERVICES—UNIVERSAL BASIC INCOME FOR TRANSITION-AGE YOUTH—ESTABLISHMENT

JANUARY 31, 2023

LETTER OF INFORMATION

The Education Advocacy Coalition for Students with Disabilities (EAC), a coalition of nearly 40 organizations and individuals concerned with education policy for students with disabilities in Maryland offers this letter of information regarding House Bill 108, which would establish universal basic income for transition-age youth in the custody of the Department of Human Services. The issue of universal basic income is complex, and there are a number of factors to consider, including the following:

- 1) The enactment of this bill would render recipients ineligible for Supplemental Security Income (SSI). The proposed universal basic income amount (\$1000 per month) is more than the current SSI rate (\$914.00 per month). Quantitatively, the proposed universal basic income is the more beneficial choice among the two. However, if there are any other state benefits included with a recipient's SSI, which, when taken into account, increase an individual's measurable income, this bill would need to be rewritten to include SSI recipients in the income bracket.
- 2) For individuals who do not hold a job for the duration of this program, it is unclear how reliance on this universal basic income would affect an application for SSI after the conclusion of this three-year period.
- 3) If this bill is intended for individuals in an out-of-home placement on their 18th birthday, it is unclear how those who are unhoused on their 18th birthday will be impacted.
- 4) A potential unintended consequence of this bill is the intentional displacement of adolescents from their homes shortly before their 18th birthday in order to receive universal basic income. As the bill currently stands, there is nothing included to prevent this intentional displacement.
- 5) As the bill is currently written, there is no requirement for the individual to continue residing in the state of Maryland after they qualify for this universal basic income.
- 6) When approaching outcome measures, it may be more fruitful to track what positive changes this program generated by the conclusion of the three-year period, as opposed to simply measuring an individual's circumstance prior to entering the program. For example, it is important to track factors such as a participant's income progress, positive changes in employment status, concluding housing status, and any geographical relocations, as this factor, in particular, may reveal where participants tend to relocate to when pursuing economic advancement.

Each of these issues requires thoughtful discussion.

For more information please contact Leslie Seid Margolis, Chair, at lesliem@disabilityrightsmd.org or 410-370-5730.

Respectfully submitted,

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Ellie Mitchell and Rick Tyler, Maryland Education Coalition, also join this testimony.