
HB809 Out-Of-Home Placement Providers-Maximum Number of Children-Exemption

House Appropriations Committee

Position: **SUPPORT**

Dear Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of The Arc Northern Chesapeake Region, I am writing to express strong support for House Bill 809. This is an important piece of legislation that would help college students navigate the transition into higher education with the opportunity to continue to receive support from their foster families.

As for most high school graduates, the idea of enrolling and attending a university can be both exciting and intimidating. For foster youth, the decision to attend and live at a university also means losing their placement in their foster home. This can undoubtedly create many obstacles, one of which is the creation of housing instability. Many foster parents are eager to continue their support of college students, however, foster care regulations limit the number of foster youth a family may have in their home at any given time. If a foster family wants to continue to foster other youth in the system, there may not be space available for the college student to return to his/her family.

Currently, if a college student were in this situation a waiver process would have to be initiated with no guarantee of it being approved. House Bill 809 removes unnecessary bureaucratic barriers and provides a practical solution to assist college students to maintain their strong sense of family support as they strive to reach their education goals.

By passing this legislation, Maryland can help foster youth succeed in higher education by reducing unnecessary disruptions and giving them the housing stability they need. I respectfully urge the committee to support this bill and help ensure that no college student in the foster care system is left without a home to go back to.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Steve Acerno, LCSW-C
Director of Family and Children Supports
The Arc Northern Chesapeake Region