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Election Law

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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

H.B. 809 - Out-of-Home Placement Providers - Maximum Number of Children – Exemption

Esteemed Members of the House Appropriations Committee:

I request today a favorable report on H.B. 809, *Out-of-Home Placement Providers - Maximum Number of Children – Exemption*.

Currently, there are bed caps for foster care homes, meaning that there is a limit on the number of children a home of any type can house at any one given time. Because of this, a foster child attending an institution of higher education might not be allowed to stay in their foster home if the foster family chooses to continue support for additional children. In this scenario, the cap set by regulations might be reached and if so, the foster child attending the institution of higher education would need to leave that home and be placed in other homes during any point in which accommodations were needed, such as scheduled breaks and holidays taken by the institution. This could create unstable housing situations, which is something we want to avoid.

Unfortunately, a situation like this played out in my county where a foster child did not accept a letter of admittance into an institution of higher education, in part, out of fear of losing placement in their current foster home. Certainly, we can all agree that for a population already facing so many hurdles, deciding between keeping a place you call home or pursuing a degree of higher education should not be one of them. Therefore, H.B. 809 simply states that the cap on the number of children within a foster home does not apply to a child that's enrolled in an accredited institution of higher education and whose family has agreed to the living arrangement of them staying during scheduled breaks, temporary closures of the institution, or temporary leaves of absence. I believe this change is critical and essential to ensuring our foster children have the best chances at success.

Furthermore, I do want to note that the Department of Human Services has been working with us on providing technical updates to the language to reflect recent regulatory changes made at the beginning of the year. Once we have those finalized, we will be sure to share them with the Committee for consideration and adoption.

As a former foster child, I am honored to introduce H.B. 809 and have it crossfiled in the Senate by Senator Zucker. I respectfully request a favorable report.

Thank you.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Mike Griffith', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Delegate Mike Griffith
District 35A, Cecil and Harford Counties
Vice Chair, Maryland Veterans Caucus, Maryland General Assembly-House of Delegates