



TESTIMONY TO THE HOUSE WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE

HB 1121: Child Care Scholarship Program- Youth Transitioning From Foster Placement to Successful Adulthood Pilot Program- Establishment

POSITION: Support

BY: Linda Kohn, President

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The League of Women Voters believes that one of the goals of social policy in the United States should be to promote self-sufficiency for individuals and families, and that **the most effective social programs are those designed to prevent or reduce poverty. It has also long recognized that child care programs are a key supportive service for families in need, as they increase parental access to education, job training, and employment.**

The League thus supports House Bill 1121, which would create a pilot program to assist transition-age youth secure affordable, quality child care via the Child Care Scholarship program. **Access to this quality child care would also help ensure the health, well-being and safety of the children of those transition-age youth.**

Many young people easing into independence and adulthood rely on their families for financial assistance and guidance. Families can support their children's transition to adulthood by perhaps allowing them to live at home while completing their education, or by helping with child care. Young people aging out of foster care do not have those options. When state support abruptly ends, they are suddenly expected to be self-sufficient and able to pay for housing, food, transportation, child care, and other basic needs on their own. As a Washington Post article¹ noted: "It's jarring to imagine what happens to kids who are simply evicted into adulthood."

The child care assistance provided in HB 1121 would help alleviate some of the instability and danger of this period of transition for youth aging out of foster care and their children. It would help bridge the gap between foster care and self-sufficiency, helping those vulnerable young people better care for themselves and their children as they transition to successful adulthood.

The League urges the committee to give a favorable report to House Bill 1121.

¹ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2024/02/08/foster-care-graduates-ongoing-support/>