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Appropriations Committee
Chair, Health and
Social Services Subcommittee

Rules and Executive
Nominations Committee



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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
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HB1121

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

Chair Atterbeary, Vice Chair Wilkins, and esteemed members of the Ways and Means Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of HB 1121. This bill aims to improve foster youth access to child care scholarships as a part of the Successful Adult Program.

Many foster youth in independent living programs are in a transitional phase, focusing on education, job training, or striving for stability. For young parents in foster care, they need child care to achieve these goals. The lack of affordable child care has prevented these parents from starting or maintaining a job which perpetuates a cycle of dependency and unemployment. Research also demonstrates that the lack of access to child care leads to an increased risk of child neglect.¹ We owe it to these parents, and their children, to have a chance at a stable and prosperous future.

HB 1121 would establish a three-year pilot program to help remove these barriers for foster youth parents by simplifying the application process. It eliminates the need for non-custodial parent signatures and removes the requirement for proof of employment or enrollment in educational or job-training programs. These requirements often create emotional and logistical burdens, preventing young parents from pursuing meaningful opportunities. By removing these obstacles, the program would encourage parenting foster youth to seek career opportunities or education without the fear of childcare issues.

Ultimately, these changes would likely increase program participation and support foster youth in successfully transitioning to independent adulthood while raising their children.

Thank you for the committee's consideration, and I respectfully request a favorable report on HB 1121.

¹ *Child care costs in the United States* (no date) *Economic Policy Institute*. Available at: <https://www.epi.org/child-care-costs-in-the-united-states/#/MD> (Accessed: 27 February 2025).