



March 3, 2025

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

House Ways & Means Committee

Position: FAVORABLE

On behalf of the Maryland Association of Resources for Families and Youth (MARFY), we respectfully submit this testimony in strong support of House Bill 1121 (HB 1121). MARFY represents a coalition of private child-caring organizations that provide foster care, group homes, and independent living programs for Maryland's most vulnerable children—those placed out of their homes due to abuse, neglect, severe mental health conditions, or complex medical needs. Our more than 200 programs statewide are committed to providing stable, supportive, and high-quality care for children in need.

This legislation establishes the *Youth Transitioning From Foster Placement to Successful Adulthood Pilot Program* within the Child Care Scholarship Program, ensuring that young adults aging out of foster care receive critical financial support for child care services. The transition from foster care to independent adulthood is fraught with challenges, including limited access to financial resources, housing instability, and difficulties securing child care while pursuing employment or education.

The bill removes unnecessary application hurdles, such as requiring proof of employment, education enrollment, or information about the non-resident parent. These barriers often prevent young parents from accessing child care assistance at a time when stability is most needed.

Investing in the passage of HB 1121 is an investment in Maryland's future. By equipping foster youth with the resources necessary to achieve economic independence, this bill fosters a stronger, more self-sufficient workforce. Ensuring access to reliable child care empowers young parents to pursue education and career opportunities, breaking cycles of poverty and instability. Moreover, the pilot program establishes a forward-thinking model for long-term support, allowing Maryland to refine its approach and implement data-driven policies that enhance the well-being of vulnerable youth. Strengthening the foundation for foster youth today creates a more resilient and prosperous Maryland for generations to come.

Maryland has a duty to support its most vulnerable young adults as they age out of the foster care system. Without targeted interventions, many of these youth face homelessness, economic hardship, and continued cycles of instability. HB 1121 is a necessary and compassionate investment in their futures.

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Maryland Association of
Resources for Families & Youth

We ask the committee to vote favorable on House Bill 1121 and reaffirm Maryland's commitment to ensuring that every foster youth has the support needed to successfully transition into adulthood.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

For more information call or email:

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