

REV. DR. JALENE C. CHASE

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HB1121- Child Care Scholarship Program- Youth Transitioning from Foster Placement to Successful Adulthood Pilot Program-Establishment House Ways and Means Committee

POSITION: SUPPORT

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

As a certified Therapeutic Foster Care and Kinship Care Parent and Retired Pastor in the United Methodist Church, I strongly support HB1121. Given the current political climate's uncertainty about employment, education, and work/school-life balance, we need to support young parents. As decision-makers, we want to help the next generation increase their chances of success, and this bill has the potential to do that.

As a Foster Parent, I had a teen mother in my care. Her goal was to secure a stable future for herself and her child, but she needed childcare and monetary assistance. She was hesitant to ask, but she knew that attending school and securing a job for childcare would increase the possibility of a better life for her child. Dropping out of school to care for her child was not a good option for their future. Not every foster parent/family is able to financially assist or provide childcare, nor be willing to sign paperwork that requires their personal information.

The voucher requires the young mother to identify the baby's father. Working with Foster Care and as a Pastor, I know that circumstances surrounding conception were not always mutual or consensual. Do we need to further traumatize the young mothers who are survivors of those situations? Can't we acknowledge their decision to continue with the pregnancy and parent without that information?

Having a sense of accomplishment does wonders for a person's self-esteem, especially for children in care and single parents. Transitioning to Adulthood Programs using resources that they secured will encourage them. Securing funding without feeling that they are a strain on the household helps them help their child. HB1121 may motivate a young parent who was already displaced from their family to find their footing as they build a family and navigate their situation, a situation most people do not understand or comprehend.

Please pass this bill. They face challenges and stereotypes that sometimes affect their quality of life. Your affirmative vote will plant seeds of support and security now that will grow these young people's confidence and character in the future as they parent the next potential leaders of our communities, county, state, and nation,

I look forward to a favorable report on HB1121, which will translate into favorable assistance for single parents and their children.

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. Dr. Jalene C. Chase



A Committed Therapeutic Foster Parent
Retired Pastor, United Methodist Church