



## TESTIMONY FOR SB0864

### Higher Education – Tuition Exemption for Foster Care Recipients - Eligibility

**Bill Sponsor:** Senator Washington

**Committee:** Appropriations

**Organization Submitting:** Maryland Legislative Coalition

**Person Submitting:** Cecilia Plante, co-chair

**Position:** FAVORABLE

I am submitting this testimony in favor of SB0864 on behalf of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. The Maryland Legislative Coalition is an association of activists - individuals and grassroots groups in every district in the state. We are unpaid citizen lobbyists and our Coalition supports well over 30,000 members.

It is important to a small, but very vulnerable population of Marylanders to get a chance for a college education. For foster-care youths, this is life changing. However, coming off of foster care, most of these youths do not have the means to afford such an education. In that case, waivers of tuition are critical, and qualifying for a waiver is a very big deal

This bill changes the qualifying age for anyone who was in foster care from age 13 to age 8.

This would mean that more foster care youths can qualify and it is a giant step forward in terms of getting their lives on track. These youths are some of the most vulnerable residents in our state, and we must help them achieve their promise in any way we can.

We support this bill and recommend a **FAVORABLE** report in committee.