

THE COALITION TO PROTECT MARYLAND'S CHILDREN

Our Mission: To combine and amplify the power of organizations and citizens working together to keep children safe from abuse and neglect. We strive to secure budgetary and public policy resources to make meaningful and measurable improvements in safety, permanence, and wellbeing.



HB0628 – Human Services – Foster Care Transition Grant Program - Establishment Senate Finance Committee

Position: SUPPORT

The Coalition to Protect Maryland's Children is a consortium of organizations and individuals formed in 1992 who are concerned about the care of Maryland's most vulnerable children and work together to educate and promote meaningful child welfare reform. **CPMC urges a favorable report on HB0628 - Human Services – Foster Care Transition Grant Program – Establishment.**

Young people aging out of foster care often face significant barriers to stable housing, employment, and financial security at the very moment they are expected to become independent. This one-year program will help our state explore providing a modest but reliable source of support to help these young adults meet basic needs while pursuing education, employment, and stable housing. Youth aging out of foster care face one of the most abrupt and unforgiving transitions of any population in our state. Research consistently shows the significantly elevated risk of homelessness, unemployment, and poverty.

This legislation addresses that directly by providing unconditional, monthly cash payments of \$1,000 for a period for one year beginning in FY 2028 as a pilot project. By ensuring these payments do not count against eligibility for benefits such as Medicaid, the Earned Income Tax Credit, or financial aid, the bill allows young people to build stability without losing other essential supports. The program's required reporting will also provide valuable data on outcomes, helping policymakers better understand how to support youth as they transition to adulthood. For young people who have already faced extraordinary adversity, HB0628 is not a handout - it is an investment in their stability and Maryland's future.

It is for these reasons that the Coalition to Protect Maryland's Children **urges a favorable report on HB0628 - Human Services – Foster Care Transition Grant Program – Establishment.**¹

¹ Members of CPMC represented by this written testimony include – American Academy of Pediatrics - MD Chapter, Arrow Child & Family Ministries, Child Justice, Center for Hope, Citizen's Review Board for Children, Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA - Baltimore County), The Family Tree, Maryland Association of Resources for Families and Youth (MARFY), Maryland Children's Alliance, Maryland Legal Aid, Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence, National Association of Social Workers – MD (NASW), the State Council on Child Abuse & Neglect (SCCAN), and individual members of the coalition.