

HB0628_ Universal_Basic_Income_for_Transition-Age_Y

Uploaded by: Cecilia Plante

Position: FAV



TESTIMONY FOR HB0628

Human Services - Universal Basic Income for Transition-Age Youth Program- Establishment

Bill Sponsor: Delegate Acevero

Committee: Finance

Organization Submitting: Maryland Legislative Coalition

Person Submitting: Cecilia Plante, co-chair

Position: FAVORABLE

I am submitting this testimony in favor of HB0628 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.

In terms of support for the youth of this state, this bill takes aim at one of the most traumatic times in the lives of youth who have been abandoned. "Graduating" out of out-of-home placement for youth who have been in the foster care system is intimidating. They are just 18 years old. Getting a job, finding a place to live, and learning to care for themselves is very, very difficult. This legislation would provide those transitioning out of foster care a stipend of \$1,000 for three years to give them a head start in making a life for themselves and ensure that they will not wind up on the streets.

Passing this bill would say a lot for the hearts of Marylanders towards our youth. We support this bill and recommend a **FAVORABLE** report in committee.

HB0628 CPMC FAV FIN.pdf

Uploaded by: Diana Philip

Position: FAV

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.

HB628- Maryland Legal Aid - FAV260325 Written Test

Uploaded by: Erica LeMon

Position: FAV



**HB0628 - Family Law - Human Services - Foster Care Transition Grant Program –
Establishment
March 25, 2026
Position: FAVORABLE**

Maryland Legal Aid submits written and oral testimony on HB0628 at the request of its sponsor, Delegate Gabriel Acevero.

Maryland Legal Aid asks that the Committee report **favorably** on HB0628, which establishes a one-year Foster Care Transition Grant Program in the Department of Human Services (DHS). Maryland Legal Aid serves residents in each of Maryland’s 24 jurisdictions, providing free legal services to the State’s low-income and vulnerable residents in a range of civil legal matters. Maryland Legal Aid is Maryland’s largest civil nonprofit law firm, representing vulnerable young people in Child in Need of Assistance (CINA) matters across the State. The one-year program established by HB628 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.

Maryland Legal Aid’s staff represent thousands of children in CINA and Guardianship (“TPR”) proceedings throughout the state. Our attorneys represent children from infancy to young adulthood continuously, while under the jurisdiction of the juvenile court, including when the youth transitions from foster care to adulthood. As a result of its extensive work in the field, Maryland Legal Aid has expertise in matters concerning child welfare, children in foster care, and particularly, youth who are aging out of foster care.

For young people who have already faced extraordinary adversity, HB0628 is a valuable and timely investment in the stability of young adults transitioning out of foster care, and in Maryland's future. HB0628 provides youth transitioning out of foster care with \$1,000 a month for one year beginning in 2028. The bill also provides that payments made under the Program may not be considered income or resources for the purpose of determining eligibility for certain benefits and requires DHS to report annually on the Program to the General Assembly. This bill provides much-needed economic security for individuals aging out of the out-of-home placement program.

The challenges facing youth who exit foster care without permanent family connections are well-documented. National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD) Maryland cohort data shows that approximately 23%–27% of Maryland youth transitioning out of foster care reported experiencing homelessness within two years of exit (ages 19–21), based on the most recent available NYTD outcomes reporting.¹ A study published in the *American Journal of Public Health* found that between 31% and 46% of youth aging out of foster care experienced homelessness by

¹Annie E. Casey Found., Youth Transitioning Out of Foster Care: Experienced Homelessness in the Past Two Years (NYTD Outcomes Data, updated June 2024).

age twenty-six.² Additionally, one in five youth formerly in foster care have not earned a high-school diploma, vocational certificate or license by age twenty-one, according to the KIDS COUNT® Data Center.³ By age twenty-six, the earnings of youth aging out of foster care are 50% lower, and their employment rates 20% lower, than those of similarly educated peers.⁴ These statistics highlight the significant barriers confronting these young adults and underscore the importance of providing some support in the nature of \$1,000 a month for one year beginning in 2028. This financial support will go a long way in providing essential support for their long-term development and success as independent adults.

Maryland Legal Aid urges the Committee to issue a FAVORABLE report on House Bill 628 and urge its ultimate passage. If you have any questions, please contact: Erica I. LeMon, Advocacy Director for Children’s Rights at elemo@mdlab.org (410) 951-7648 or (410) 935-0937.

² Amy Dworsky, Laura Napolitano & Mark E. Courtney, Homelessness During the Transition from Foster Care to Adulthood, 103 *Am. J. Pub. Health* S318, S318–23 (2013).

³ Annie E. Casey Found, What Happens to Youth Aging Out of Foster Care (Feb. 25, 2025), <https://www.aecf.org/blog/what-happens-to-youth-aging-out-of-foster-care>.

⁴ Anthony Bald, Joseph J. Doyle Jr., Max Gross & Brian A. Jacob, Economics of Foster Care, 36 *J. Econ. Persp.* 223 (2022).

XHB628 Support (Written).pdf

Uploaded by: Kenzie Funk

Position: FAV



**Testimony in SUPPORT of
House Bill 628: Human Services – Foster Care Transition Grant Program – Establishment**

Budget and Taxation Committee

Position: Favorable

March 25, 2026

At Strong Schools Maryland, we work to support the faithful implementation and full funding of the promises legislated through the landmark Blueprint for Maryland's Future. The Blueprint envisions a public education system where all students can feel safe and supported to learn and thrive in their school community. It was designed to specifically address systemic inequities that disproportionately impact historically marginalized communities so that every student has the opportunity to succeed and achieve both in school and in life. As a result, **Strong Schools Maryland offers favorable testimony in support of HB 628 – Human Services – Foster Care Transition Grant Program – Establishment** which aims to establish a universal basic income for individuals aging out of the out-of-home placement program.

Students and young adults who transition out of foster care or other out-of-home placement often face significant barriers to stability as they move into adulthood. Without consistent financial support, many of these young people experience housing and transportation insecurity, limited access to education and employment opportunities, increased financial instability, and mental health issues. These challenges can disrupt educational pathways and attendance and make it far more difficult for young people to concentrate in school or pursue postsecondary education, job training, or stable employment when building their future.¹

The proposed bill would establish a program to provide **\$1,000 cash per month for a period of a year** if the individual resided in an out-of-home placement on their eighteenth birthday. This direct financial support would help ensure that transition age students have the resources needed to secure housing, access transportation, pursue education or workforce opportunities, and build a stable foundation as they move into adulthood. Importantly the bill also includes outcome measures for participants, including starting income levels, geographic distribution, employment status, and housing security. These outcomes can help the State to better understand the impact of the program and inform future policy decisions to support transition age students.

The Blueprint is built on the understanding that students need comprehensive support systems to succeed, not only in the classroom, but also in their broader lives and communities. Providing direct economic stability during this critical transition period is an investment in the long-term success of young people who have already navigated significant challenges. Policies such as HB628 complement the Blueprint's

¹ [What Happens to Youth Aging Out of Foster Care \(2025\)](#)

commitment to equitable support systems. When young people have the resources they need, they are better positioned to thrive in their communities.

For these reasons, Strong Schools Maryland urges the Budget and Taxation Committee to issue a favorable report on HB 628.

Please contact Kenzie Funk at kenzie@strongschoolsmaryland.org for additional questions.

HB628_SENATE HEARING_MARFY_FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Therese Hessler

Position: FAV



March 25, 2026

House Bill 628 – Human Services - Foster Care Transition Grant Program – Establishment

Senate Finance Committee

Position: SUPPORT

The Maryland Association of Resources for Families and Youth (MARFY) respectfully submits this testimony in strong support of House Bill 628.

MARFY represents licensed private child-placing agencies and community-based providers delivering foster care, treatment foster care, group homes, and independent living services through more than 200 programs across Maryland. Our members serve children and youth who have experienced abuse, neglect, complex trauma, and significant behavioral health needs. We work every day with young people preparing to transition from out-of-home placement into adulthood — often without the safety net of family support.

Young people aging out of foster care face dramatically disproportionate economic hardship compared to their peers. According to the Annie E. Casey Foundation, nearly 1 in 5 youth aging out of foster care experience homelessness by age 21. (<https://www.aecf.org/blog/child-welfare-and-homelessness>)

Additionally, The National Foster Youth Institute reports that only about 50% of youth aging out of foster care are employed by age 24, and fewer than 3–4% earn a four-year college degree. (<https://nfyi.org/issues/homelessness/>)

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services’ National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD) further shows high rates of housing instability, unemployment, and public assistance reliance among former foster youth within two years of exit. (<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/cb/data-research/nytd-data>)

These outcomes are not the result of lack of effort, they are the result of structural disadvantage and the absence of generational wealth, family safety nets, and financial cushioning that most young adults rely upon during early adulthood.

HB628 proposes a grant program of \$1,000 per month for eligible transition-age youth. This is not simply financial assistance it is stabilization infrastructure, providing young adults a foundation for success.



Research on guaranteed income pilots/grant programs across the country demonstrates measurable improvements in housing stability, employment stability, mental health outcomes, and reduced financial volatility.

The Urban Institute’s evaluation of guaranteed income pilots found that participants experienced improved employment outcomes and reduced material hardship. (<https://www.urban.org/research/publication/preliminary-analysis-guaranteed-income>)

Similarly, the Stockton Economic Empowerment Demonstration showed recipients were more likely to obtain full-time employment and experienced significantly reduced income volatility. (<https://www.stocktondemonstration.org/full-report>)

Also importantly, unconditional cash support has been shown to reduce stress and improve mental health — a critical factor for youth with trauma histories. (<https://www.givedirectly.org/research-on-cash-transfers/>)

Without intervention, many youths aging out of foster care cycle into emergency shelters, inpatient behavioral health services, criminal legal system involvement, and long-term public assistance dependency.

The public cost of homelessness, hospitalization, and incarceration far exceeds the proactive investment proposed under HB628. Providing structured, time-limited guaranteed income is not merely compassionate, it is fiscally responsible.

HB628 appropriately limits eligibility to youth who were in out-of-home placement at age 18, targeting those most at risk during the transition to adulthood.

This policy does not replace workforce programs, tuition waivers, or case management supports. It strengthens them. It gives young adults the stability required to use those supports effectively. It recognizes that independence requires a foundation.

In conclusion, HB628 represents an innovative, evidence-informed approach to improving long-term outcomes for one of Maryland’s most vulnerable populations.

Investing in Maryland’s youth now, is a wise investment in Maryland’s future. MARFY respectfully urges a favorable report on House Bill 628. Thank you for your consideration.

For more information call or email:

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