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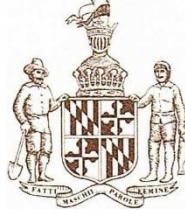
Health and Government Operations Committee

Subcommittees

Public Health and Minority Health Disparities, Chair

Elder and Long-Term Care

Maternal, Infant, and Child Health



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THE MARYLAND GENERAL ASSEMBLY

ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

HB0915- Workgroup on Aging Out of Foster Care—Amended

April 3, 2026

Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee:

House Bill 915 creates a workgroup of human service professionals and foster care participants, advocates, and experts to look at the challenges unique to adults who have aged out of foster care and what successful programmatic models exist that could be implemented in Maryland for giving them the best chance of enjoying social, career, personal, and economic success as adults.

Each year, thousands of Maryland youth age out of foster care and without the sustainable “family” support that most others can rely on in navigating early adulthood. This likely factors significantly in their disproportionately high risks of housing instability, food insecurity, unemployment, untreated physical and behavioral health conditions (including suicide ideation and success), and education shortcomings. While Maryland continues to invest in programs that support youth transitioning out of foster care, there is a notable drop off in adequate, targeted support for.

HB915 acknowledges that while, at its best, foster care serves as a temporary, short- or long-term, physical, emotional, and psychological refuge, nurturing and support to children experiencing dangerous home situations, it cannot mitigate all of the impacts of a childhood marked in such a way that such intervention is necessary, nor is the foster care system immune from enacting its on traumatic and scaring effects on some of the children in its care. And just as noted in other situations, Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) reverberate for decades, if not for a lifetime, regardless of whether the person experiencing it has ever been a recipient of foster services. Given the disproportionate representation of formerly fostered adults and those from kinship home among those struggling to build a stable, self-sufficient, successful life, a closer look at the challenges and potential actionable solutions is indicated.

The **HB915** workgroup would be tasked evaluating the nature, effectiveness, and limitation of existing programs and resources, identify challenges to making successful transition to adulthood prior to, and for the first years after, aging out, and examining the nature, costs, and feasibility of implementing or expanding programs that have been shown to improve outcomes beyond Maryland state and local jurisdictions, such as the use of an anonymous hotline. As it passed the House a \$2,000 stipend is allocated from existing DHS funds to teach of the previously fostered youth workgroup participants. A report with recommendations to guide our efforts in this area would be due by July 2027

I urge a favorable report.

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