



## TESTIMONY FOR HB0915 Workgroup on Aging Out of Foster Care

**Bill Sponsor:** Delegate Hill

**Committee:** Judicial Proceedings

**Organization Submitting:** Maryland Legislative Coalition

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

**Position:** FAVORABLE

I am submitting this testimony in strong support of HB0915 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.

Our members are very supportive of the youth in Maryland, and in particular, those who are disadvantaged. Youth graduating from foster care programs need a lot of services and programs to help them transition into functioning adults.

In Maryland, we have created programs to help youth coming out of foster care to become successful. What we haven't been about to figure out, is whether those programs are effective and what changes we would have to make to increase the success rate for our foster care youth.

This bill would create a workgroup to:

- identify the types of resources currently available for youth who have aged out of foster care to achieve self-sufficiency, including stable housing, food security, reliable transportation, educational programs, employment, physical and behavioral health care services, disability accommodations, financial resources, and other services to address basic needs
- determine the effectiveness of currently available resources, and identify challenges with current services and programs that are offered before a youth ages-out of the system and seek to assist youth to successfully transition into adulthood and self-sufficiency
- determine the types of resources that youth who have aged out of foster 11 care are most likely to utilize when seeking continuing support, such as adults, peers, financial assistance organizations, and community groups
- identify the circumstances under which youth in foster care were removed from the youth's home county during any period of foster care
- identify programs that have successfully improved outcomes for youth who have aged out of foster care, such as a hotline or an anonymous support line

Our members approve of this approach to follow up and ensure that what we are doing is effective. We strongly support this bill and recommend a **FAVORABLE** report in committee.