

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.



CPMC
COALITION TO PROTECT
MARYLAND'S CHILDREN

HB1383 - Children in Need of Assistance - Permanency Plan Requirements

Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

April 2, 2026

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 HB1383 - Children in Need of Assistance - Permanency Plan Requirements.**

Maryland's law requires courts during Children in Need of Assistance (CINA) permanency and review hearings to find whether the local department of social services has made "reasonable efforts" to finalize preparation plans for a youth aging out of foster care and whether the youth's individualized needs will be met through implementation of those plans. Current statute lists those needs only in broad categories (health, education, safety, and preparation for independence). Concerns have been raised that not enough attention or resources are devoted to this process across all jurisdictions, leaving too many youth aging out of care at risk of economic, housing, and/or health instability after they exiting foster care.

Although federal law requires judicial findings on reasonable efforts in CINA cases, it is left to the states to define what these actually are. HB1383 establishes categories to be used as thresholds in determining the status of efforts being made towards a youth's successful transition into self-sufficiency and adulthood as well as encouraging the timeliness of implementation. These include:

- Health, medical, and dental needs;
- Education needs and education plan, including timely enrolment in educational programs and efforts to share information about postsecondary education and vocational programs;
- Addressing any ongoing safety concerns of the youth;
- Emotional stability and timeliness of therapeutic referrals or services provided to the youth;
- the stability and appropriateness of the youth's housing after the case is terminated;
- socialization needs, including enrollment in extracurricular activities or programs; and
- financial needs and literacy to ensure self-sufficiency.

The bill also calls for youth to have access to all necessary documents, such as one's birth certificate, social security card, passport, driver's license, and/or state-issued identification card.

HB 1383 provides clarity to this process and will better serve the needs of foster youth aging out of Maryland's system. It encourages due diligence of both the local departments as well as the judiciary in assisting these youth in not only meeting their basic needs, but successfully entering adulthood and thriving. It is for these reasons that the Coalition to Protect Maryland's Children **urges a favorable report on HB1383 - Children in Need of Assistance - Permanency Plan Requirements.**¹

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