

HB0915_Crossover_Bill

RichardKaplowitz_FAV

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MD 21703

TESTIMONY ON CROSSOVER BILL HB#0915- POSITION:

FAVORABLE

Workgroup on Aging Out of Foster Care

TO: Chair Smith, Jr., Vice Chair Waldstreicher and members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee

FROM: Richard Keith Kaplowitz

My name is Richard Keith Kaplowitz. I am a resident of District 3, Frederick County. I am submitting this testimony in support of crossover bill HB#0915, **Workgroup on Aging Out of Foster Care**

Forever Family has documented the problems and answered the question *What is "Aging Out" of Foster Care?*¹

Approximately 24,000 American teenagers in foster care turn 18 years old each year. Many still in high school, these teens find themselves in need of jobs, a place to live, and a means of transportation to survive.

National studies have shown that within two to four years of leaving foster care at age 18:

- 40% were homeless
- 40% were receiving public assistance or were incarcerated
- 40% experienced drug or alcohol abuse
- 46% had not finished high school
- 51% were unemployed
- 84% became parents

Maryland's promise is that We Leave No One Behind. If we are to live up to that promise we need to understand the problems that occur when youth age out of foster care and how we can ameliorate and fix those problems to achieve better outcomes.

We can meet that goal by passing this bill to establish the Workgroup on Aging Out of Foster Care to identify the types of resources available for youth who have aged out of foster care to help them achieve self-sufficiency, determine the effectiveness of currently available resources and identify the challenges with current services and programs offered before a youth ages out of the system. We can then require the Workgroup to submit a report of its findings and recommendations by July 1, 2027, to the General Assembly.

That collected data will permit crafting legislation and programs to find solutions to identified issues.

I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on crossover bill HB#0915.

¹ <https://www.foreverfamily.org/aging-out-of-foster-care#:~:text=40%25%20were%20homeless,84%25%20became%20parents>