



March 11, 2026

House Ways & Means Committee

House Bill 1305 – State Child Welfare System – Reporting

Position: SUPPORT

Chair Wilkins, Vice Chair Feldmark, and Members of the Committee:

The Maryland Association of Resources for Families and Youth (MARFY) respectfully submits this testimony in strong support of House Bill 1305, “State Child Welfare System – Reporting.” This legislation enhances transparency and accountability by requiring the State Department of Education (MSDE), in cooperation with the Department of Human Services (DHS), to include comprehensive data on children and foster youth in annual reporting and to develop a report with actionable recommendations for improving outcomes for students involved in the State child welfare system.

As an association representing licensed child-placing agencies, treatment providers, group homes, and independent living programs across Maryland, MARFY members see firsthand how data or the lack of it profoundly influences policy decisions affecting foster youth’s educational trajectories. Accurate, disaggregated reporting is essential to understanding patterns of academic stability, attendance, disciplinary actions, and importantly post-secondary outcomes such as college enrollment and completion.

HB1305 requires MSDE to report detailed education data for children in the foster care system including placement stability, individualized education plan status, dropout rates, attendance, disciplinary measures, and high school completion. Critically, this bill adds the number of foster youth who enroll in college and graduate within six years which is a metric not currently reported and mandates comparison to peers not in foster care where appropriate.

Accurate, disaggregated data helps to create a roadmap for effective intervention and strategic next steps for reforms and policies. When legislators, educators, service providers, and stakeholders can see where disparities exist and how they evolve over time, targeted supports can be deployed more efficiently and equitably. Strong data supports better decisions about resource allocation, intervention design, and evaluation of programs intended to stabilize learning environments and strengthen long-term success for foster youth.

By requiring comparison data between students in the State child welfare system and those not in foster care where appropriate, HB1305 brings much-needed context that will illuminate systemic gaps and guide strategic investments in evidence-based supports for foster youth.

For these reasons, MARFY respectfully urges a favorable report on House Bill 1305. Thank you for your consideration.

For more information call or email:

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