

February 15, 2024

The Honorable Luke Clippinger
Chair, Judiciary Committee
House Office Building, Room 101
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: TESTIMONY ON HB 542 - Department of Human Services - Children in Foster Care - Luggage - POSITION: INFORMATIONAL ONLY

Dear Chair Clippinger and members of the Judiciary Committee:

The Maryland Department of Human Services (DHS) thanks the Committee for the opportunity to provide a letter of information for House Bill 542 (HB 542). With offices in every one of Maryland's jurisdictions, DHS helps Marylanders in economic need, provides preventive services, and protects children and adults. The Social Services Administration (SSA) within DHS implements the state's child welfare program which serves the children HB0542 seeks to assist.

House Bill 542 requires us to establish and maintain a decentralized supply of new luggage for personal belongings for youth in foster care when removed from a placement. The local departments have internal strategies to address the need for youth to have appropriate luggage items during placement changes and to ensure youth are not using disposable bags to transport their clothing. Luggage is provided through community partnerships or the use of existing State resources and replenished as necessary by the local departments.

This legislation requires record keeping of the luggage and reporting the data to the General Assembly once a year. The bill impacts the local departments of social services by increasing the need to purchase luggage that may not be utilized, storage to maintain the luggage, staff monitoring and maintenance of the luggage through data collection, and reporting both local and centralized. House Bill 542 creates additional expenditures, administrative burdens, and storage burdens for a practice we already have in place.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide the aforementioned information to the Committee for consideration during your deliberations. We look forward to your decision and welcome continued collaboration on HB0542.

If you require additional information, please contact Rachel Sledge, Director of Government Affairs, at rachel.sledge@maryland.gov.

In service,



Rafael López
Secretary