



Advocates for Children and Youth is a statewide non-profit focused on improving the lives and experiences of Maryland's children through policy change and program improvement. We champion solutions to child welfare, education, health, and juvenile justice issues, positioning us to influence the full spectrum of youth experiences. This multi-issue platform helps us to improve the entirety of children's worlds—the systems they touch, the people they interact with, and the environment where they live.

Testimony before the House Appropriations Committee

In SUPPORT of

House Bill 1288- Higher Education - Tuition Waivers for Foster Care Recipients and Unaccompanied Homeless Youth

Emily Schappi-Fuller, Advocates for Children and Youth

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Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on House Bill 1288 – Higher Education - Tuition Waivers for Foster Care Recipients and Unaccompanied Homeless Youth. Advocates for Children and Youth (ACY) supports this bill.

The tuition waiver is an essential tool for ensuring that Maryland's most vulnerable youth can successfully pursue a postsecondary education. According to national and multistate studies, while 84% of 17- and 18-year-old foster youth report wanting to go to college, only 20% of those who graduate from high school attend college and only 2-9% actually earn their bachelor's degree.¹

The goal of Maryland's tuition waiver is to alleviate some of the financial barriers for foster youth and unaccompanied homeless youth attending college. Every year in Maryland, nearly 60% of first-year community college students discover that, despite being fully eligible to attend college, they are not ready for postsecondary studies.² After taking placement tests, these students learn that they must take remedial courses in English or mathematics, which do not earn college credits.³ Two four year colleges in Maryland, have reported that over 90% of their first year students are requiring remedial course work.⁴ Research has shown that even larger percentages of foster youth are required to take remedial courses in math and/or English compared with non-foster youth.⁵ HB 1288 will ensure that these non-credit classes are covered by Maryland's tuition waiver. **Advocates for Children and Youth urges the committee to issue a favorable report on HB 1288, to ensure that foster and unaccompanied homeless youth who initially need to take remedial classes will still be able to utilize the waiver for those courses and achieve their higher education goals.**

¹ Fostering Success in Education: National Factsheet on the Educational Outcomes of Children in Foster Care, located at <http://www.fostercareandeducation.org/OurWork/NationalWorkingGroup.aspx> at p.1.

² The Status of College Readiness in Maryland, located at <http://mgaleg.maryland.gov/Pubs/BudgetFiscal/2013-Policy-Briefing-College-Readiness.pdf>, at p. 2.

³ Id.

⁴ College and Career – Are Maryland Students Ready?, located at: <http://mgaleg.maryland.gov/Pubs/BudgetFiscal/2016fy-budget-docs-operating-HEPB1-Higher-Education-Policy-Briefing---Remediation.pdf> at p. 15.

⁵ "Charting the Course: Using Data to Support Foster Youth College Success" located at http://www.cacollegepathways.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/charting_the_course_final.pdf, at p. 14.

