



Advocates for Children and Youth improves the lives and experiences of Maryland's children and youth by advancing policies and programs across multiple issue areas that tackle racial disparities and improve outcomes to ensure that every child has the opportunity to thrive. www.acy.org

**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 127
Education – Public School Attendance – Homeless Children
Hearing of the Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee
Rachel White, Child Welfare Policy Director
January 30, 2019**

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on Senate Bill 127 Education; Public School Attendance-Homeless Children. Advocates for Children and Youth (ACY) supports this bill.

Senate Bill 127 simply aligns Maryland with federal law regarding the educational stability of youth awaiting foster care placement. The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), now contains key protections for children in foster care that require State and local educational agencies to collaborate with child welfare agencies to ensure the educational stability of children in foster care. These provisions coupled with the federal Fostering Connections Act ensures that children in foster care experience minimal educational disruption as the result of foster care placement and receive the same opportunities as their peers to develop the skills necessary to be successful in school and life.

Until December 10, 2016, the educational stability of children awaiting foster care placement were covered under the federal McKinney-Vento (MV) Act.-which is an act that ensures the educational stability of homeless children and youth. Effective December 10, 2016, children awaiting foster care placement were removed from the federal definition of homeless youth and were to be covered under ESSA. SB 127 aims to align Maryland with federal law. It is important to note that children awaiting placement foster care placement may still be considered to be homeless if they are experiencing housing insecurity and to do not have a stable residence.

For the reasons stated above, **ACY urges you to issue a favorable report on SB 127** to ensure that youth awaiting foster care placement continue to receive educational stability in coordination with federal law.



