

SENATE BILL 685

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CF HB 439

By: **Senators Benson, Currie, Ferguson, Guzzone, Jennings, Kagan, King, Madaleno, Manno, McFadden, Middleton, Montgomery, Muse, Nathan–Pulliam, Pinsky, Ramirez, Rosapepe, and Young**

Introduced and read first time: February 6, 2015

Assigned to: Judicial Proceedings

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Family Law – Information and Services for Foster Children and Former Foster**
3 **Children**

4 FOR the purpose of requiring a juvenile court, in certain permanency planning and
5 guardianship review hearings, to make a finding as to whether a local department
6 of social services has made reasonable efforts to take certain actions for a child who
7 is at least a certain age; requiring a local department to advise a child before
8 emancipation of the right to reenter care and procedures for reentering care under
9 certain provisions of law; requiring a local department to contact a certain former
10 child in need of assistance under certain circumstances and advise the child of the
11 right to reenter care and procedures for reentering care under certain provisions of
12 law; requiring a local department to document certain efforts; requiring the Social
13 Services Administration to adopt certain regulations to require that all children in
14 foster care who are at least 18 years of age have certain documents, information, and
15 records at emancipation; altering the information that the Administration is
16 required to give certain children in out–of–home placement annually; requiring the
17 Department of Human Resources to report to the General Assembly on or before a
18 certain date on certain plans of each local department of social services to provide
19 and promote affordable housing and employment opportunities for former foster
20 youth; requiring the plans to include certain information; and generally relating to
21 information and services for foster youth and former foster youth.

22 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,
23 Article – Courts and Judicial Proceedings
24 Section 3–816.1(b)
25 Annotated Code of Maryland
26 (2013 Replacement Volume and 2014 Supplement)

27 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



1 Article – Family Law
2 Section 5–525(b)(3), (j), and (k)
3 Annotated Code of Maryland
4 (2012 Replacement Volume and 2014 Supplement)

5 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,
6 That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

7 **Article – Courts and Judicial Proceedings**

8 3–816.1.

9 (b) (1) In a hearing conducted in accordance with § 3–815, § 3–817, § 3–819, or
10 § 3–823 of this subtitle, the court shall make a finding whether the local department made
11 reasonable efforts to prevent placement of the child into the local department’s custody.

12 (2) In a review hearing conducted in accordance with § 3–823 of this
13 subtitle or § 5–326 of the Family Law Article, the court shall make a finding whether a
14 local department made reasonable efforts to:

15 (i) Finalize the permanency plan in effect for the child; [and]

16 (ii) Meet the needs of the child, including the child’s health,
17 education, safety, and preparation for independence; AND

18 **(III) FOR A CHILD WHO IS AT LEAST 18 YEARS OF AGE:**

19 **1. ENROLL THE CHILD IN HEALTH INSURANCE THAT**
20 **WILL CONTINUE AFTER THE CHILD IS EMANCIPATED;**

21 **2. SCREEN THE CHILD FOR ELIGIBILITY FOR PUBLIC**
22 **BENEFITS AND ASSIST THE CHILD WITH APPLICATIONS FOR PUBLIC BENEFITS;**

23 **3. ENSURE THAT THE CHILD WILL HAVE STABLE**
24 **HOUSING FOR AT LEAST 12 MONTHS AFTER THE DATE OF EMANCIPATION; AND**

25 **4. ENSURE THAT THE CHILD HAS OR WILL HAVE**
26 **APPROPRIATE AND SUFFICIENT INCOME TO LIVE INDEPENDENTLY AFTER**
27 **EMANCIPATION.**

28 (3) In a hearing conducted in accordance with § 3–815, § 3–817, or § 3–819
29 of this subtitle, before determining whether a child with a developmental disability or a
30 mental illness is a child in need of assistance, the court shall make a finding whether the
31 local department made reasonable efforts to prevent placement of the child into the local
32 department’s custody by determining whether the local department could have placed the

1 child in accordance with a voluntary placement agreement under § 5–525(b)(1)(i) or (iii) of
2 the Family Law Article.

3 (4) The court shall require a local department to provide evidence of its
4 efforts before the court makes a finding required under this subsection.

5 (5) The court’s finding under this subsection shall assess the efforts made
6 since the last adjudication of reasonable efforts and may not rely on findings from prior
7 hearings.

8 Article – Family Law

9 5–525.

10 (b) (3) (i) The Administration shall establish a program of out-of-home
11 placement for former CINAs:

12 1. whose commitment to a local department was rescinded
13 after the individuals reached the age of 18 years but before the individuals reached the age
14 of 20 years and 6 months; and

15 2. who did not exit foster care due to reunification, adoption,
16 guardianship, marriage, or military duty.

17 (ii) The Administration shall adopt regulations that include
18 eligibility requirements in accordance with federal law and regulations for providing
19 assistance to individuals at least 18 years old.

20 (iii) A local department may not seek legal custody of a former CINA
21 under a voluntary placement agreement.

22 (iv) A former CINA described in subparagraph (i) of this paragraph
23 may remain in an out-of-home placement under a voluntary placement agreement for
24 more than 180 days if the former CINA continues to comply with the voluntary placement
25 agreement and a juvenile court makes a finding that the continuation of the placement is
26 in the best interests of the former CINA.

27 **(v) 1. A LOCAL DEPARTMENT SHALL ADVISE A CHILD, IN**
28 **WRITING, BEFORE EMANCIPATION OF THE RIGHT TO REENTER CARE AND THE**
29 **PROCEDURES FOR REENTERING CARE UNDER THIS PARAGRAPH.**

30 **2. IF A LOCAL DEPARTMENT HAS KNOWLEDGE THAT A**
31 **FORMER CINA DESCRIBED IN SUBPARAGRAPH (I) OF THIS PARAGRAPH IS**
32 **HOMELESS, AS DEFINED IN 42 U.S.C. § 11434A, INCLUDING BY OBTAINING**
33 **INFORMATION REGARDING THE FORMER CINA’S HOMELESSNESS IN AN**
34 **APPLICATION FOR PUBLIC ASSISTANCE OR THROUGH CONTACT BETWEEN THE**

1 **FORMER CINA AND A CASEWORKER, THE LOCAL DEPARTMENT SHALL CONTACT**
2 **THE FORMER CINA AND ADVISE THE FORMER CINA OF THE RIGHT TO REENTER**
3 **CARE AND PROCEDURES FOR REENTERING CARE UNDER THIS PARAGRAPH.**

4 **3. A LOCAL DEPARTMENT SHALL DOCUMENT ALL**
5 **EFFORTS MADE UNDER THIS SUBPARAGRAPH.**

6 (j) The Administration shall adopt regulations that:

7 (1) establish goals and specify permanency planning procedures that:

8 (i) maximize the prospect for reducing length of stay in out-of-home
9 placement in the best interests of children; and

10 (ii) implement the intent of this section;

11 (2) prohibit a local department from seeking the custody or guardianship
12 of a child for placement in foster care solely because the child's parent or guardian lacks
13 shelter or has a disability or solely because the child's parents are financially unable to
14 provide treatment or care for a child with a developmental disability or mental illness;

15 (3) specify the compelling reasons for placing a child in a local jurisdiction
16 other than the local jurisdiction where the child's parent or guardian resides, under
17 subsection (f)(3)(ii) of this section;

18 (4) require the local department to make appropriate referrals to
19 emergency shelter and other services for families with children who lack shelter;

20 (5) establish criteria for investigating and approving foster homes,
21 including requirements for window coverings in accordance with § 5-505 of this subtitle;
22 [and]

23 (6) for cases in which the permanency plan recommended by the local
24 department or under consideration by the court includes appointment of a guardian and
25 rescission of the local department's custody or guardianship of a child:

26 (i) establish criteria for investigating and determining the
27 suitability of prospective relative or nonrelative guardians; and

28 (ii) require the filing of a report with the court as provided in §
29 3-819.2 of the Courts Article; AND

30 **(7) REQUIRE THAT ALL CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE WHO ARE AT**
31 **LEAST 18 YEARS OF AGE HAVE A BIRTH CERTIFICATE, A SOCIAL SECURITY CARD,**
32 **HEALTH INSURANCE INFORMATION, MEDICAL RECORDS, AND A DRIVER'S LICENSE**
33 **OR STATE-ISSUED IDENTIFICATION CARD AT EMANCIPATION.**

1 (k) (1) At least one time each year, the Administration shall provide a child in
2 an out-of-home placement who is at least 13 years old information regarding benefits
3 available to the child on leaving out-of-home care.

4 (2) The information provided under paragraph (1) of this subsection shall
5 include information regarding tuition assistance, health care benefits, [and] HOUSING, job
6 training and internship opportunities, **AND THE RIGHT TO REENTER CARE AND**
7 **PROCEDURES FOR REENTERING CARE UNDER SUBSECTION (B)(3) OF THIS SECTION.**

8 (3) The Administration may provide the child the information required
9 under paragraph (1) of this subsection:

10 (i) at a permanency planning hearing or review hearing held in
11 accordance with § 3-823 of the Courts Article; or

12 (ii) by certified mail.

13 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That, on or before December 1,
14 2015, the Department of Human Resources shall report to the General Assembly, in
15 accordance with § 2-1246 of the State Government Article, on the plans of each local
16 department of social services for partnering to provide and promote affordable housing and
17 employment opportunities for former foster youth. The plans shall:

18 (1) describe any existing efforts to address the housing and employment
19 needs of former foster youth, including how Family Unification Program vouchers are used
20 to support youth aging out of foster care;

21 (2) propose new strategies, including ways to partner with private and
22 public sector employers and workforce development entities, including the Governor's
23 Workforce Investment Board and local workforce investment boards, to provide job
24 opportunities for former foster youth;

25 (3) provide and take into account projections of the number of youth
26 expected to transition out of foster care each year for the next 4 years; and

27 (4) propose potential partnerships with the Department of Housing and
28 Community Development, local public housing authorities, and community-based
29 organizations to support the placement of foster youth into safe and stable housing.

30 SECTION 3. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect
31 October 1, 2015.