



Maryland Association of
Resources for Families & Youth

TO: The Honorable Maggie McIntosh, Chair
Members, House Appropriations Committee
The Honorable Michele Guyton

FROM: Pamela Metz Kasemeyer
Danna L. Kauffman

DATE: January 20, 2021

RE: **SUPPORT** – House Bill 258 – *State Child Welfare System – Reporting*

The Maryland Association of Resources for Families and Youth (MARFY) is a statewide network of private agencies serving at-risk children and youth and advocates for a system of care in Maryland that meets the needs of children and families. MARFY is a program of Maryland Nonprofits and **supports** the passage of House Bill 258.

In 2015, legislation was enacted that requires the Department of Humans Services (DHS), by December 1 of each year, to report specified information regarding children and foster youth in the State child welfare system. The report is to be provided to the General Assembly and published on DHS's website. House Bill 258 adds additional information that DHS is to include in the required report that will assist in better identifying components of the child welfare system where the health and educational outcomes require focused attention and possible reform.

The legislation also requires the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) to report specified information regarding foster youth and children in the child welfare system to both the General Assembly and DHS by December 1 each year. Requiring MSDE to collect and report information will assist DHS in its analysis of program effectiveness and the identification of system challenges and need for focused attention and reform. Much of the educational system data cannot be collected or analyzed by DHS. House Bill 258 requires that MSDE provide data that can then be utilized by DHS in conjunction with its own data.

The outcomes and success of children that MARFY members serve is often directly impacted by their educational experiences. The collection of data by MSDE and the collaboration between MSDE and DHS in assessing the educational components of the child welfare system will enhance not only the Departments in their evaluation of the need for policy and program changes but will also assist the child placement agencies and child advocacy programs in identifying disparities and disparate outcomes within the child welfare system and work to identify and implement targeted meaningful interventions. A favorable report is requested.

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