



October 11, 2018

Dear Members of the Pennsylvania Legislature,

Foster Care Alumni of America (FCAA) is the national voice for the over 400,000 youth currently in foster care and the nearly 12 million American foster care alumni with 24 state chapters, including FCAA Pennsylvania. **Today we are writing you to ask you to support HB 1745 and pass it this session.**

We want to tell you why HB 1745 is so critical to youth in foster care. As alumni of the foster care system, we understand the educational challenges that current foster youth face and how critical it is for ALL children to have access to quality education, and postsecondary opportunities.

In the United States, it is estimated that 20% of foster youth will attend college and only an estimated 2-9% graduate with a bachelor's degree, even less go on to pursue a masters, or PHD. As youth who have aged out or left the foster care system and sought out higher education opportunities, we understand the complexities of navigating college, and other higher education opportunities, with limited resources, and no support systems. We know that many of our peers also want to pursue higher education opportunities but struggle to do so due to financial instability, lack of family support and resources.

We ask you to consider if your child was one of the 12 million adults who, as a child, grew up in foster care. How would their life be different if they had the benefit of this bill? Wouldn't you want a youth in foster care to have access to the same resources and opportunities, even if they did not grow up in your home? By supporting the passing of HB 1745, we will not only continue to provide quality education and more educational access to foster youth, but we are honoring our commitment to investing in the development and well-being of young people exiting the system. **We urge you to do what you can do pass HB 1745 this session because foster youth deserve a chance at success.**

The FCAA Pennsylvania members are dedicated to ensuring that the voices of those with lived experience in foster care inform policy and practice in our state. We encourage you to contact us at pa.chapter@FosterCareAlumni.org if you would like to talk to us about HB 1745.

Sincerely,

Nico'Lee Biddle, LCSW & Marcia Hopkins, MSW

Policy Representatives on behalf of FCAA- Pennsylvania Chapter

Connecting Today ... Transforming Tomorrow

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