

Memorandum in Support

COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN AND THE LAW

Children # 2

April 30, 2019

S. 735
A. 5090

By: Senator Montgomery
By: M. of A. Jean-Pierre
Senate Committee: Higher Education
Assembly Committee: Higher Education
Effective Date: Immediately

AN ACT to amend the education law, in relation to creating the “foster care higher education scholarship pilot program”; and providing for the repeal of such provisions upon expiration thereof.

LAW AND SECTIONS REFERRED TO: Section 604 of the Education Law.

THE COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN AND THE LAW SUPPORTS THIS LEGISLATION

The Committee on Children and Law supports S735/A5090 as proposed to establishes the foster care higher education scholarship pilot program; grants awards for the purpose of enhancing opportunities for higher education for children and young adults receiving foster care services in New York.

This proposed law, in sum, would amend the Education Law by adding a new section 668-h to read as follows:

“§ 668-h. Foster care higher education scholarship pilot program. Purpose. The president shall establish a pilot program for the purpose of granting scholarship awards to enhance opportunities for higher education for children and young adults who are receiving, or who have received, foster care services in New York state. Such scholarship awards shall be available for the tuition and non-tuition costs of eligible students enrolled in approved in-state undergraduate programs or vocational training programs.”

The New York State Bar Association Committee on Children Law in conjunction with the Hon. Judith Kaye Scholarship Committee of the New York Bar Foundation, annually reviews scholarship applications of youth in care who have fought and succeeded against adversity and all odds and have become true leaders within their own lives.

Upon review of these applications, the Committee on Children and Law recognizes the strength, courage, and desire of these youth to succeed and give themselves the lives they dream to accomplish. These children have been forced into extreme hardship early in life and have been strong enough to stay focused academically. Within the applicants received by the Committee on Children and Law alone, the children do not have a biological or foster family to turn to for assistance, some do not even have a bed to sleep on and get a good night's rest to study, and all are fighting for a better life for themselves through higher education. Currently, public funding for youth in care, does not cover all costs for wards of the state.

State and Federal Child welfare agencies undeniably recognize the extraordinary financial hardship of youth who have survived extreme family hardship having had been placed in foster care and during school age.

Accordingly, the Committee on Children and Law **SUPPORTS** as proposed S735/A5090 to establish the foster care higher education scholarship pilot program.