



General Assembly

February Session, 2026

Raised Bill No. 5419

LCO No. 1910



Referred to Committee on HIGHER EDUCATION AND
EMPLOYMENT ADVANCEMENT

Introduced by:
(HED)

***AN ACT REQUIRING THE DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND
FAMILIES TO EXPAND ELIGIBILITY FOR POSTSECONDARY
EDUCATION BENEFITS FOR CERTAIN YOUTH.***

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General
Assembly convened:

- 1 Section 1. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2026*) (a) As used in this section:
- 2 (1) "Department" means the Department of Children and Families;
- 3 (2) "Postsecondary education program" means any program that
4 leads to an academic degree or certification in a vocation or employment
5 training; and
- 6 (3) "Postsecondary education funding programs" means the program
7 set forth in department policy (A) 28-1 under which the department
8 funds the postsecondary education of a youth who is committed to the
9 department, remains committed at the age of eighteen and meets the
10 requirements established by the department in its policies and
11 regulations, and (B) 25-2 under which the department funds the
12 postsecondary education of a youth who has been adopted on or before

13 such youth's eighteenth birthday and meets the requirements
14 established by the department in its policies and regulations.

15 (b) The Commissioner of Children and Families shall amend the
16 department policies and regulations regarding the postsecondary
17 education funding programs to provide an extension of time for the
18 qualification under such programs of any youth whose postsecondary
19 education was disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Nothing in this
20 section shall be construed to require the department to continue
21 providing case management services for any youth who begins
22 receiving funding under the postsecondary education funding
23 programs when such youth is older than twenty-one years of age.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	<i>July 1, 2026</i>	New section

Statement of Purpose:

To require the Department of Children and Families to expand eligibility of postsecondary education benefits for foster and adopted youth whose postsecondary education was disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

[Proposed deletions are enclosed in brackets. Proposed additions are indicated by underline, except that when the entire text of a bill or resolution or a section of a bill or resolution is new, it is not underlined.]