

I am also writing in support of H 7905. The Hope Scholarship is designed for those students who have access to other resources in supports: supports to help them navigate the first two years of college and a safe place to live while they attend. Former foster youth do not have access to these supports, and H 7905 is designed to help them move forward. Today, young people who have spent time in foster care have among the lowest chances of attaining a postsecondary degree or credential of any group in our society, and it is essential that we do not impoverish our young people's future simply because their parents were unable to care for them.

When thinking about former foster youth in higher education, I am always reminded of a young woman I will call 'S.,' who was a student of mine a decade ago. She worked over 40 hours a week in order to afford college, despite access to financial aid—and even with all that work, the only reason she was able to stay in school was because the last foster family she lived with as a minor allowed her to continue to live in their home during college. Had she not been lucky enough to find this home, she could not have continued in college. Today, S. has a Master's Degree and works for a large corporation, a future that could easily have been impossible.

In passing H 7905, please ensure that a sufficient cohort of young people will be able to benefit from this pilot program. So many foster youth think college is an impossibility for them, and we need to show that it can be possible. This legislation will do that.

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