Anthony Brown and Ken Ulman release Caring for Maryland's Children plan to improve child welfare

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Proposal will reduce number of children in foster care by 1,000 over next four years, boost services for youth in foster care system

UPPER MARLBORO, MD – Today, Lt. Governor Anthony G. Brown and County Executive Ken Ulman released their Caring for Maryland's Children plan to improve child welfare, the sixth major policy proposal of their campaign for Governor and Lt. Governor. The proposal will reduce the number of children in foster care by 1,000 over the next four years, from 5,848 in 2013 to 4,848 in 2018 — a decrease of 17%. And it will cut the percentage of youth who leave foster care for a permanent home but are forced to return to the system by 10% over the same period.

To accomplish these goals, the proposal will create an aggressive public service campaign, establish a statewide mentoring network to support adoptive families and youth aging out of foster care, and secure for Maryland a Federal Child Welfare Waiver. The plan will also establish a trauma-informed child welfare system and dedicate funding to build transitional housing for young adults who age out of foster care.

Maryland has made progress improving the lives of foster children over the last seven years. The State has helped over 17,000 children find permanent places to live, reduced the number of children in foster care by 43 percent to a 26-year low, cut the number of children in group homes by 57 percent, and recruited and retained over 2,000 foster parents. The Caring for Maryland's Children plan builds on that progress toward the goal of ensuring every Maryland child finds a permanent and loving home.

"My life changed forever when I became an adoptive parent and held my son Jonathan for the first time, and his love has been one of the great gifts of my life," said Lt. Governor Anthony G. Brown. **"Every Maryland child deserves to grow up in a stable and loving home and each of us bears a responsibility to care for all the children in our community, beginning with the most vulnerable. This plan builds on the progress we've made over the last seven years and is a key step toward achieving the goal of finding every Maryland child a permanent and nurturing home."**

"As an adoptive parent, no Marylander is more qualified to lead our state forward toward the goal of finding supportive homes for all our children than Anthony Brown," said County Executive Ken Ulman. **"Anthony's leadership has driven Maryland to help over 17,000 foster children find a permanent place to live over the last seven years, while recruiting and retaining over 2,000 foster parents. He deeply understands the impact a nurturing home has on a child's entire life, and will continue to lead the way for Maryland's children as Governor."**

The Brown-Ulman "Caring for Maryland's Children Plan" will:

1. Reduce the Number of Youth in Foster Care by 1,000 and Cut Those Returning to Foster Care to 10 Percent by 2018

    a. Launch an aggressive public service announcement (PSA) and informational campaign aimed at increasing awareness of and interest in adopting Maryland foster children

    b. Establish statewide mentoring networks to support both adoptive families and youth aging out of foster care

c. Secure a federal Child Welfare Waiver for the State of Maryland

2. Better Serve Youth by Establishing a Trauma-Informed Child Welfare System

a. Approach child welfare through a culture of traumatic stress awareness and with an aim to ensure that actions taken increase resilience and minimize additional stress to the child

3. Ensure Access to Transitional Housing for Youth Aging Out of Foster Care

a. Dedicate funding to construct new housing and retrofit previously-utilized buildings for young adults.

In addition to their *Caring for Maryland's Children* plan, Lt. Governor Anthony G. Brown and County Executive Ken Ulman have unveiled five other policy proposals, including the Running Start Maryland plan to provide a high-quality, universal, and voluntary Pre-K education to every Maryland child, the Brown-Ulman Compact with Maryland Business to make Maryland's business climate the best in the nation, the Our Path to Zero proposal to end domestic violence and sexual assault in Maryland, the Brown-Ulman Compact with Maryland Veterans to ensure that every Maryland Veteran has the support they deserve, and the Brown-Ulman Ready to Work plan to improve CTE and technical education in Maryland.