Rep. Harris, Sen. Hughes & PHEAA Co-host Event to Aid Supporters of Foster Care Students in Achieving Higher Education

Harrisburg, PA (April 25, 2024) – Representative Jordan Harris, Senator Vincent Hughes, and the Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency (PHEAA) are jointly hosting the Philly Foster Care Convening for secondary and postsecondary advocates who are dedicated to aiding students in navigating the financial aid process for foster youth in Philadelphia.

The event, which is held in collaboration with the Philadelphia Education Fund, I-LEAD, the Philadelphia College Prep Roundtable, and the Philadelphia School District, will be held on Tuesday, April 30 from 10:00 – 11:30 AM. The event is open to anyone who supports youth in foster, including secondary and postsecondary education professionals, child welfare professionals, resource families, policymakers, as well as students.

“We've gathered a group of higher education experts who can provide guidance for those who support foster youth,” explained Senator Vincent Hughes, event co-host and PHEAA Board Member. “These students are facing very different challenges in achieving higher education and we want to be prepared to assist them in any manner that we are able.”

“It is an honor to be able to aid those who support foster youth,” said Representative Jordan Harris, event co-host. “They have a unique calling that is admirable. We want to give them further knowledge and tools to guide foster youth through the college planning process.”

Ron Felder, Higher Education Access Partner-Philadelphia and Diona Brown, PHEAA Director of School Services, will deliver updates on pivotal financial aid opportunities, such as the Chafee Education and Training Grant Program and the PA Fostering Independence Tuition Waiver Program.

State Representative Jordan Harris and State Senator Vincent Hughes will offer remarks underscoring the significance of legislative support for these students.

Madeline Birkner, Senior Manager of Persistence & College Partnerships at the Philadelphia Education Fund (PEF), will share insights on how students can pay for college and PEF’s efforts to support youth.

Barbara Mattleman, Consultant at I-LEAD, and Cynda Clyde, Program Director of Fostering College Attachment I-LEAD, will review innovative programs at several colleges that have specific programs to support foster youth, as well as available scholarships.
“At PHEAA, we welcome every opportunity to provide guidance to a successful higher education journey for every student who desires it,” said Senator Wayne Fontana, Chairman of the PHEAA Board of Directors. “Our financial aid experts will be sharing their knowledge and experience in the financial aid community to aid foster youth during this much-needed convening of advocates of foster youth, established by Representative Harris and Senator Hughes.”

Register to attend this event here.

# # #

About PHEAA

The Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency (PHEAA) was created by the Pennsylvania General Assembly in 1963 to provide affordable access to higher education for PA students and families. Through the years, PHEAA has evolved into one of the nation's leading providers of student financial aid services, including the Commonwealth's first state-based student loan program – PA Forward. PHEAA also serves millions of students through its loan guaranty, loan servicing, financial aid processing, and other programs. PHEAA conducts student loan servicing operations nationally as American Education Services (AES).

PHEAA's press releases are accessible at https://www.pheaa.org/about/press-releases/.