



"Being here for Maryland's Children, Youth, and Families"

Testimony submitted to Senate Finance Committee

Hearing Date: February 27, 2020

Testimony on HB152

Budget Reconciliation and Financing Act of 2020

House Appropriations Committee

POSITION: OPPOSE

The Maryland Association of Youth Service Bureaus, which represents a network of bureaus throughout the State of Maryland, opposes the provision in HB 152 that reduces the mandatory increase in community behavioral health spending to the extent required by the 2019 minimum wage bill and the bipartisan HOPE Act of 2017, meant to correct 20 years of chronic underfunding.

Youth Service Bureaus are charged by the Department of Juvenile Services to work with at-risk youth and their families to prevent further involvement in the juvenile justice system.

Unfortunately, Youth Service Bureaus have experienced a history of level or decreased funding for youth prevention and treatment services and rely on any increases to defray the rising cost of doing business. Behavioral health providers face rising rent, health premiums, equipment costs, and staff salaries. Many Youth Service Bureaus faced unfunded mandates to purchase expensive electronic health records. .

As the legislature works to fund strategies recommended in the Kirwan report, we must remember that education only works if children are healthy enough to learn. Our youth with mental health and substance use disorders cannot succeed academically unless we can afford to address their behavioral health needs.

We respectfully ask you to OPPOSE the reduction of the rate increase to behavioral health services.

Respectfully Submitted:

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MAYSB Chair

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