



THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Testimony in Support of House Bill 1528

Maryland Council on Health in All Policies - Establishment

Dear Chair Pendergrass and Members of the Health and Government Operations Committee:

HB1528 establishes a Maryland Council on Health in All Policies that will develop cross-sector policies recommendations to positively impact the health of all Marylanders.

We've all heard the phrase, "an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure." As a public health professional, this principle rings especially true. Prevention is the foundation of effective public health.

In 2017, Senator Shirley Nathan-Pulliam and I introduced a bill to create a workgroup to develop a Health in All Policies framework and make recommendations regarding how health considerations may be incorporated into the decision-making processes for all areas of policy in Maryland.

The workgroup published a final report in September 2019, where they recommended that "a Health in All Policies Council be established, consisting of a wide variety of stakeholders. The Workgroup recommends a process that will assist the Health in All Policies Council in choosing or developing a Maryland Health in All Policies Framework. The Workgroup recommends a purposed budget and funding plan."

HB1528 establishes and funds a Health in All Policies Council that will enshrine the workgroup's recommendations in state law.

Health in All Policies addresses the social determinants of health that drive poor health outcomes and health inequalities. When an individual's zip code results in a twenty year difference in life expectancy, compared to a neighboring, more affluent zip code, it means there are clear failures in our policies across affordable housing, quality education, public transportation and workplace discrimination practices.

It means we must improve our policymaking.

The state has already committed to accounting for human health in our decision-making, now let's follow through on this commitment.

This Health in All Policies Council will be composed of experts representing the professional, racial, ethnic, cultural, and gender diversity of Maryland. These diverse insights and perspectives are essential to best understand all of the causes for our poor health outcomes. This will allow us to develop the most effective solutions.

I request a favorable report.