



Member Agencies:

Advocates for Children and Youth
Baltimore Jewish Council
Behavioral Health System Baltimore
CASH Campaign of Maryland
Catholic Charities
Episcopal Diocese of Maryland
Family League of Baltimore
Fuel Fund of Maryland
Health Care for the Homeless
Homeless Persons
Representation Project
Job Opportunities Task Force
League of Women Voters of Maryland
Loyola University Maryland
Maryland Catholic Conference
Maryland Center on Economic Policy
Maryland Community Action
Partnership
Maryland Family Network
Maryland Hunger Solutions
Paul's Place
Public Justice Center
St. Vincent de Paul of Baltimore
Welfare Advocates

Maryland Alliance for the Poor

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TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 36

Juvenile Proceedings – Fines, Fees, and Costs

House Judiciary Committee

January 16, 2020

Submitted by Stacey Jefferson and Matt Quinlan, Co-Chairs

House Bill 36 prohibits the court in a juvenile proceeding to impose civil fines or court costs, including those after delinquency is found, assess attorney's fees for the services of a public defender or other attorney appointed by the court to represent the child, or order payment from a parent to support a child.

Juvenile defendants and their parents may be indigent when using the services of a public defender or other court-appointed attorney during a juvenile proceeding. Levying additional fees on youths and their families during an already trying time is unjust. Youth who are unable to pay such costs and fees may face increased incarceration or probation for their inability to pay timely, and their parents can be sent to debt collectors and go into serious debt trying to pay them for their children. These costs and fees serve no rehabilitative purpose for the youth, and in practice have disproportionately affected children of color, a population already marginalized and overburdened by the court system. No parent should have to decide between paying for basic necessities, such as groceries, education, and housing, and paying arbitrary court costs and fees that will not help rehabilitate their child or keep further recidivism rates down.

Maryland Alliance for the Poor (MAP) supports legislation that reduces the financial burden on Marylanders living around or below the poverty line and those suffering from the negative effects of poverty. Situations such as those addressed by this bill only serve to add to the hardships of youths and their families already struggling financially, especially when no purpose exists to help rehabilitate the child or ease already burdened families.

MAP appreciates your consideration and respectfully requests a favorable report on House Bill 36.

Maryland Alliance for the Poor (MAP) is a coalition of service providers, faith communities, and advocacy organizations advancing statewide public policies and programs necessary to alleviate the burdens faced by Marylanders living in or near poverty, and to address the underlying systemic causes of poverty.