



March 2, 2022

The Honorable Chairwoman Delores Kelly  
The Honorable Vice-Chairman Brian Feldman  
The Honorable Chairman Guy Guzzone  
The Honorable Vice-Chairman Jim Rosapepe  
Honorable Members of the Senate Finance and Budget & Taxation Committees

**RE: Funding for Youth Development Programming in Senate Bill 833**

Dear Honorable Chairs, Vice-Chairs and Members of the Committees,

We appreciate the focus in Senate Bill 833 on addressing community needs, particularly those in the areas of racial injustice and prevention programming. The establishment of The Office of Social Equity and the funding prescribed within is a thoughtful use of potential revenue from cannabis.

We are thrilled to see the recognition of the importance of funding available to providers like us and look forward to working with the Office of Social Equity on this opportunity as stated on page 49, of the proposed legislation. **"(IV) GRANTS TO COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS TO PROVIDE SERVICES TO PREVENT VIOLENCE, SUPPORT YOUTH DEVELOPMENT, PROVIDE EARLY INTERVENTION FOR YOUTH AND FAMILIES, AND PROMOTE COMMUNITY STABILITY AND SAFETY."** We know there are likely to be changes made to this bill and ask that this remain in the legislation as it moves forward.

We know there will be incredible competition for grant funding and urge you to ensure there are adequate funds set aside, not only for prevention, but a full array of recreational, leadership, and educational programming. **Prevention works best when it is wrapped in fun as part of a larger youth development curriculum and offered by trusted community partners like Boys & Girls Clubs.**

From the Eastern Shore to Western Maryland, Clubs provide a safe place for youth to go when schools are closed. Our mission, "To enable all young people, especially those who need us most, to reach their full potential as productive, caring, responsible citizens" guides Clubs as we seek to serve youth and meet their unique needs. An additional investment of funds from the State would allow Clubs to serve more youth with quality programming and wraparound support.

Thank you to the bill sponsors for recognizing the important role that youth-serving community-based organizations play in building resilience among Maryland's children, youth, and families. We look forward to working with the Office of Social Equity in the future.

Sincerely,

Vanessa Lyon  
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