



House Bill 1196

Blueprint for Maryland's Future Implementation - Funding and Independent Evaluation - Alterations

MACo Position: **SUPPORT WITH
AMENDMENTS**

To: Budget and Taxation and Education,
Energy, and the Environment Committees

Date: March 30, 2023

From: Brianna January

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS HB 1196 WITH AMENDMENTS**. The original intent of this legislation was to provide State grants to local school districts to cover the salaries of Local Blueprint Coordinators, mandatory positions required by the Blueprint for Maryland's Future. **Amendments have removed that provision and effectively changed the intent of the bill.**

MACo strongly supports HB 1196 as originally drafted, with the initial intent to provide grants to cover the salaries of the Local Blueprint Coordinators, and requests amendments to revert HB 1196 back to providing State grants to fund these positions.

All 24 local jurisdictions are deep into the implementation of the Blueprint and its many complex facets, many of which are very costly and pose immediate and long-term challenges for counties. HB 1196 as originally drafted would have been a welcome step toward addressing the many fiscal components of the Blueprint.

Instead, HB 1196 was amended to mandate minimum salaries of \$150,000 for Blueprint coordinators across all jurisdictions without any consideration of the cost or significant variance in cost of living and financial capacity of Maryland's diverse counties. This is not reasonable or practical: for example, a Coordinator in Garrett County would make the same as one in Prince George's County, despite their very different costs of living and economic needs.

Furthermore, as amended, the bill no longer provides critical State support to fully fund these positions in the form of grants – as the legislation originally intended – and instead places a new funding mandate onto counties atop their already daunting funding obligations.

The financial support of HB 1196 as originally imagined would have provided critical help for counties – relieving them of the additional burden related to hiring and staffing implementation coordinators. In doing so, the original bill would have created full parity across all 24 localities and empower each to hire the same high-caliber candidates to help guide their county through Maryland's most consequential education reform in a generation.

Counties request amendments to revert HB 1196 back to providing State grants to fund these positions. For these reasons, MACo **SUPPORTS HB 1196** and urges a **FAVORABLE** report **with those AMENDMENTS**.