



WES MOORE
GOVERNOR

STATE HOUSE
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ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND
21401-1925

March 26, 2024

The Honorable Ben Barnes
Chair, Appropriations Committee
Room 121, House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland, 21401

Chairman Barnes, Vice-Chair Chang, and members of the Appropriations and Health and Government Operations Committee,

On behalf of Governor Wes Moore, I would like to thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of SB 482 - Governor's Office for Children - Engaging Neighborhoods, Organizations, Unions, Governments, and Households (ENOUGH) Grant Program (ENOUGH Act of 2024).

The ENOUGH Act is a data-backed approach to eliminate poverty in our rural, urban, and suburban communities by channeling state money and support toward our most impoverished neighborhoods and building new partnerships across all levels of society to take on this issue. Eligible applicants must be partnerships that include at least one community-based non-profit, one local government entity, and one local public school – and may consist of unions or worker organizations, anchor institutions, small businesses, local law enforcement, and faith-based organizations. Applicants must submit a thorough proposal that includes a clear vision for transformation in their community.

The ENOUGH Act expands on the success of programs like the nonprofit initiative “Harlem Children’s Zone” in New York and the federal initiative “Promise Neighborhoods” by building safer, healthier communities to break cycles of poverty and violence. Maryland needs to focus on the communities that have gone unseen, unheard, and underestimated – and we must do it in a way that follows best practices and elevates community voices. That’s exactly what our legislation will help achieve. ENOUGH will channel private, philanthropic, and state resources toward communities across our state with high rates of generational child poverty.

The Moore-Miller Administration is excited for the Governor’s Office for Children to work with leaders on the ground to ensure each community’s specific issues are being addressed. We want to ensure that this next chapter in our state’s success is written by our communities – and not simply for them. That mindset is at the center of the ENOUGH Act.

We proudly launched a frontal assault on child poverty on inauguration day. Today, that work continues. And it isn’t just important – it is essential. If you are born into poverty, you are very likely to die in poverty. We cannot win the decade if one in eight Marylander children are currently living at or below the poverty line. Poverty is a choice, and good policies can help us break these cycles of hardship. We need to disrupt patterns that drive pain, hardship, and tragedy and unlock the full promise of our state. We can – and we will – through this legislation. The ENOUGH Act will help make Maryland more competitive, elevate our communities, and refocus state government.

On behalf of the Moore/Miller Administration, I urge a favorable report on SB 482.

Yours in Service,
Eric Luedtke
Chief Legislative Officer