HB 428 – Community Schools – Rental Assistance for Community School Families Program and Fund – Establishment
Appropriations Committee
Position: Favorable

February 06, 2024
The Honorable Delegate Ben Barnes, Chair
6 Bladen St.
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Honorable Delegate Ben Barnes and Members of the Committee:

I am writing on behalf of the Maryland State Conference of the NAACP. We support House Bill 428, Community Schools – Rental Assistance for Community School Families Program and Fund-Establishment, which is currently before the Appropriations Committee. We ask that all members of the committee support this very important legislation that provides necessary funding for children and their families, specifically low-income families, to retain housing when they are faced with an impending eviction.

This legislation is one measure to ensure that children and their families maintain stability, this will allow those children to stay in their home and the community school district that they are familiar with. Providing funding for eviction prevention through community schools provides additional resources and services directly to students and families without delay, which is why this investment into the community is important.

Research demonstrates that students who are housing insecure are 6 times more likely to be chronically absent and 4 times more likely to drop out of high school. For those who remain in school, they are more likely to have a lower GPA and poor mental health outcomes. The research shows that families thrive, and students are more likely to do better when they have safe and stable housing.

A report conducted by Stout Risius and Ross found that an investment of $40 million would yield $92 million in cost savings. (https://www.mdeconomy.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/Assessment-of-Marylands-Need-for-EPF-and-Directional-Fiscal-Impacts-of-EPF_FINAL_2023.12.19-1.pdf). The report further "quantified the following potential annual fiscal benefits to Maryland if EPF were implemented for tenant households at high risk of disruptive displacement:

- Economic impacts associated with employment and income stability – potentially $21 million to $32 million.
- Decrease in the need for housing social safety net responses such as emergency shelter and rapid re-housing – potentially $19 million to $28 million.

- Economic impacts associated with increased educational attainment for children - potentially $18 million to $27 million.
- Decrease in the need for Medicaid spending on health care - potentially $4 million to $7 million.
- Retained economic value realized by minimizing out-migration - potentially $4 million to $6 million.
- Decrease in the need for publicly funded unemployment benefits - potentially $3 million to $5 million.
- Decrease in foster care costs for children experiencing homelessness - potentially $2 million to $3 million.
- Decrease in incarceration costs associated with criminalizing people experiencing homelessness - potentially $2 million to $3 million.
- Retained federal funding for Maryland public schools - potentially $1 million to $1.5 million.

According to evictionresearch.net, black households are 3 times more likely to face evictions. (https://evictionresearch.net/maryland/report/baltimore.html#:~:text=46%25%20more%20female%20headed%20households,1%2C614%20White%20evictions). They further state "eviction reinforces poverty and limits housing opportunities for the nation's most economically vulnerable". The NAACP advocates for the most vulnerable and this is why we believe this legislation cannot be ignored or delayed.

We recognize that this bill may need to be refined to minimize the burden on community school coordinators and we look forward to working with Del. Stewart and other advocates to ensure this bill will meet the needs of the vulnerable families that need this funding.

For these reasons, we support HB 428 and strongly urge your support to protect all the citizens of Maryland.

In Service,

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