

February 26, 2024

SB 482 - ENOUGH Act of 2024

Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

SUPPORT

Dear Committee Members:

Today we write to support Maryland's ENOUGH Act (SB 482 / HB 694) to uplift children and families in the state and give those in under-resourced and underinvested neighborhoods a chance to not have their circumstance dictate their outcomes in life. We are a coalition of national organizations that work to improve economic mobility for millions of children and families across the country. We have come together to support the ENOUGH ACT because we believe this legislation can help achieve this goal in communities across Maryland. Through our work, we have seen the power of this approach and believe it can tackle the root causes of poverty and improve outcomes for children and families. If this bill is signed into law, we are committed to helping the State of Maryland implement the ENOUGH Act in a collaborative, community-oriented, evidence-driven way.

For far too long generational cycles of poverty and lack of opportunity have held back Maryland children and families from Worcester County to Garrett County and every town, village and city in between. The ENOUGH Act will combat this pervasive problem by funding and assisting the development of new neighborhood and regional place-based partnerships while strengthening existing ones through a competitive grant process administered by the Governor's Office for Children. This grant program will support Maryland's children and young people through education opportunities and career readiness. Additionally, the bill will boost families and communities by providing access to good jobs, safe neighborhoods, affordable housing, and quality healthcare, including mental health services.

We are especially supportive of this legislation because it will use place-based initiatives, targeting the root causes of hardship in communities – rural, suburban, and urban – that have disproportionately high numbers of children living in poverty. Place-based initiatives take an evidence-based approach, looking at what children, families, and neighborhoods actually need, and providing quality social services through education programs, family support, community development, and healthcare for those who need it the most, changing the trajectory and outcomes for children by placing them on a path toward social and economic mobility, from cradle to career.

With its long history of supporting education projects, including complementary initiatives like the Blueprint for Maryland's Future, Maryland is leading the nation in the fight against child poverty with this legislation. Passed in 2021, the Blueprint increases education funding to

accelerate student outcomes and improve the quality of the state's schools. The ENOUGH Act takes this one step further, deploying a whole-of-community approach, designed to give communities the support and resources needed to uplift children and families, and ultimately break the cycle of generational poverty. The strength of the ENOUGH Act is that it will create critical infrastructure for place-based partnerships, expand access to resources to implement this work throughout Maryland, and set a national example for statewide investments in economic mobility. Furthermore, the ENOUGH Act will align and leverage cross-sector community partners for the equitable distribution of services for children and families; promote systems change by funding and advocating for programs and policy changes across the state; and collect, assess, and share data by working with partner organizations and communities to identify the needs within neighborhoods, implement evidence-based solutions, and use data to continuously improve programs for better, more equitable outcomes.

We urge the Committee to support this legislation. We believe the ENOUGH Act will not only greatly benefit children and families in Maryland but will serve as an example for states around the country in the fight against poverty.

Thank you for the opportunity to express our collective opinion on SB 482 / HB 694 - we encourage a favorable report on this bill.

Sincerely,

Results for America
Partners for Rural Impact
Purpose Built Communities
StriveTogether
William Julius Wilson Institute at Harlem Children's Zone