Senate Bill 482

Governor's Office for Children – Engaging Neighborhoods, Organizations, Unions, Governments, and Households (ENOUGH) Grant Program
(ENOUGH Act of 2024)

MACo Position: **SUPPORT**

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

Date: March 1, 2024

From: Sarah Sample and Dominic J. Butchko

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS** SB 482. This bill re-establishes the Governor's Office for Children as well as the grant fund to advance place-based strategies for combating child poverty across Maryland.

Local government agencies are an integral partner in working to end child poverty across the state. Schools, local management boards, health departments, social service teams, and law enforcement agencies all play a crucial role in combating food, housing, and financial insecurity for residents, particularly children and their families. Hunger, homelessness, and lack of healthcare access are adversely correlated with educational outcomes, job readiness, and economic opportunity. The conditions of SB 482 further enable local governments to aid in the effort to break this cycle of poverty for families in need.

Reestablishing the Governor's Office for Children begets a universal coordinating strategy that will serve as the pivot point for funding across multiple agencies throughout the state. This allows for a holistic, organized approach within State government and across public and private sectors at the federal, state, and local levels. Provisions of the bill enable local agencies to receive funding as well as perform a variety of functions within the matrix of programs across the child service continuum.

A comprehensive and efficient network of supports for children and their families will assist local jurisdictions in combating the adverse effects of resource scarcity for children and their families in order to promote social and emotional well-being for all. Accordingly, MACo urges the Committee to issue a **FAVORABLE** report on SB 482.