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Testimony on House Bill 428
Community Schools - Rental Assistance for Community School Families
Program and Fund - Establishment
House Appropriations Committee

Position: Favorable

Maryland Nonprofits is a statewide association of almost 1800 nonprofit organizations and institutions. We urge you to support House Bill 428 to stabilize the housing situation of children and families in need of rental assistance through their Community Schools.

The Community Schools Program is a part of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future's recognition that many factors outside the classroom can negatively impact school performance, particularly for children whose families are living in or near poverty. This program is already investing significant funds to assist families by coordinating wraparound services like transportation, healthcare, counseling, and healthy food.

Recent research has found that students facing eviction are 6 times more likely to be chronically absent and 4 times more likely to not complete high school. Students who have experienced housing insecurity were more likely to have a lower Grade Point Averages as well as poorer mental health outcomes. The National Center on Family Homelessness estimates that the graduation rate of children experiencing homelessness is less than 25%. Families cannot thrive without safe, stable housing. Schools cannot thrive with a student body forced to live in unstable and deplorable conditions. Failure to address housing insecurity creates a significant threat to the success of our current and future investments in public education.

The Community Schools Program offers a vehicle in place, already established to coordinate services holistically, to identify and address needs for rental assistance. Creating the program and fund proposed by House Bill 428 will both strengthen the Blueprint and advance our efforts to overcome systemic racial, economic and gender inequities.

We urge you to give House Bill 428 a favorable report.

