



THE SENATE OF MARYLAND  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

**Sponsor Testimony in Support of SB668**  
**Children's Cabinet Fund – Renaming and Funding for Grants to Local Management Boards**  
**February 24, 2024**

Chair Guzzone, Vice-chair Rosapepe, and Members of the Budget and Taxation Committee,

The Children's Cabinet Interagency Fund is tasked with providing resources to local management boards to strengthen community-based services for children and families. Local management boards have taken on the critical work of preventing youth violence, providing mental and behavioral health services, supporting workforce development, confronting poverty, and supporting early childhood education and school readiness. To achieve the organization's goals, local management boards conduct local needs assessments, map assets, identify gaps and strategies, provide funding for the most vulnerable, and provide rapid response during crises.

The work of Maryland's local management boards is necessary and contemporary as the state confronts child poverty, hunger, and housing affordability. The money in the Children's Cabinet Interagency Fund enables this important work.

Unfortunately, the Children's Cabinet Interagency Fund had its funding slashed from \$47 million in 2011 and funds never returned to previous levels. Funding currently sits around \$21 million. Demand for the work of our local management boards has grown dramatically, as has the cost of operation. Additional funding is needed to meet the needs of vulnerable Maryland children and families.

SB668: Children's Cabinet Fund – Renaming and Funding for Grants to Local Management Boards, requires that the governor include in the annual budget bill the following appropriations for the fund to be used for grants to eligible local management boards:

- For fiscal year 2028, \$3,000,000.
- For fiscal years 2029-2031, \$2,000,000 annually.

Additionally, SB668 will change the statutory name of the Children's Cabinet Fund to the Children's Cabinet Interagency Fund. Maryland government websites already reflect this name change.

I respectfully request a favorable committee report on SB668, so that Maryland's children and families can receive the support they need to not just survive, but thrive.