

Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 172
Maryland Health Equity Resource Act

Senate Budget & Taxation
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Pokuua Owusu-Acheaw
Government Relations

The Maryland State Education Association supports Senate Bill 172 which establishes Health Equity Resource Communities in a targeted attempt to reduce health disparities, improve health outcomes, improve access to primary care, promote primary and secondary prevention services, and reduce health care costs and hospital admissions and readmissions, throughout the state.

MSEA represents 75,000 educators and school employees who work in Maryland's public schools, teaching and preparing our 896,837 students for careers and jobs of the future. MSEA also represents 39 local affiliates in every county across the state of Maryland, and our parent affiliate is the 3 million-member National Education Association (NEA).

MSEA supports the belief that all Marylanders deserve access to high-quality, affordable health care. Unfortunately, there are health inequities in our state that many individuals face based on their race, ethnicity, disability, or their zip code. The COVID-19 pandemic has further exposed these health inequities and highlighted the need to address comorbidities and otherwise improve health outcomes in our state. This initiative builds upon a 2012-2016 pilot that successfully increased access to health resources, improved residents' health, reduced hospital admissions, and created cost savings. With a continued and guaranteed funding source, this act will further positive impacts of the original pilot program to increase improved and cost-saving healthcare, and provide holistic approaches to making our communities safer and healthier places for all to thrive.

MSEA requests a favorable report on Senate Bill 172.