



March 4, 2021

The Honorable Chairman Guy Guzzone
The Honorable Chairwoman Delores Kelly
The Honorable Vice-Chairman Jim Rosapepe
The Honorable Vice-Chairman Brian Feldman
Honorable Members of the Budget & Taxation and Finance Committees

RE: Funding for Youth Development Programming in Senate Bill 708

Dear Honorable Chairs, Vice-Chairs and Members of the Committees,

We appreciate the focus in Senate Bill 708 on addressing community needs, particularly those in the areas of racial injustice and prevention programming. The establishment of The Office of Social Equity and the funding prescribed within is a thoughtful use of potential revenue from cannabis.

We are thrilled to see the recognition of the importance of funding available to providers like us and look forward to working with the Office of Social Equity on this opportunity as stated on page 49, of the proposed legislation. “(IV) GRANTS TO COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS TO PROVIDE SERVICES TO PREVENT VIOLENCE, SUPPORT YOUTH DEVELOPMENT, PROVIDE EARLY INTERVENTION FOR YOUTH AND FAMILIES, AND PROMOTE COMMUNITY STABILITY AND SAFETY”. We know there are likely to be changes made to this bill and ask that this remain in the legislation as it moves forward.

We know there will be incredible competition for grant funding and urge you to ensure there are adequate funds set aside, not only for prevention, but a full array of recreational, leadership, and educational programming. Prevention works best when it is wrapped in fun as part of a larger curriculum and offering by trusted community partners like Boys & Girls Clubs.

From the Eastern Shore to Western Maryland, Clubs provide a safe place for youth to go when schools are closed. Our mission, “To enable all young people, especially those who need us most, to reach their full potential as productive, caring, responsible citizens” guides Clubs as we seek to serve youth and meet their unique needs. An additional investment of funds from the State would allow Clubs to serve more youth with quality programming and wraparound support.

Thank you to the bill sponsors for recognizing the important role community-based organizations play. We look forward to working with the Office of Social Equity in the future.

Sincerely,

The Maryland Alliance of Boys & Girls Clubs