



TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 548

Human Services-Trauma-Informed Care-Commission and Training

House Health and Government Operations Committee

February 9, 2021

Submitted by Stacey Jefferson and Julia Gross, Co-Chairs

Member Agencies:

Advocates for Children and Youth
Baltimore Jewish Council
Behavioral Health System Baltimore
CASH Campaign of Maryland
Catholic Charities
Episcopal Diocese of Maryland
Family League of Baltimore
Fuel Fund of Maryland
Health Care for the Homeless
Homeless Persons
Representation Project
Job Opportunities Task Force
League of Women Voters of Maryland
Loyola University Maryland
Maryland Catholic Conference
Maryland Center on Economic Policy
Maryland Community Action
Partnership
Maryland Family Network
Maryland Hunger Solutions
Paul's Place
Public Justice Center
St. Vincent de Paul of Baltimore
Welfare Advocates

Marylanders Against Poverty

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Marylanders Against Poverty (MAP) supports HB 548. This bill would establish the Commission on Trauma-Informed Care to coordinate a statewide initiative to prioritize the trauma-responsive and trauma-informed delivery of State services that impact children, youth, families, and older adults.

ACEs, or Adverse Childhood Experiences, are a category of early life traumas which negatively impact long-term health, prosperity, and social mobility outcomes. ACEs encompass traumatic experiences at all levels of severity including emotional, physical, and sexual abuse, neglect, domestic and intimate partner violence, substance use in the home, mental illness in the home, the incarceration of a household member, and the separation and/or divorce of adult caregivers. ACEs have the potential to hinder an individual's neurological, socio-behavioral, and emotional development, all of which have lifelong repercussions for a child's health and well-being.¹

MAP supports HB 548 because children living in deep poverty are five times more likely to experience abuse and neglect and other adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), which begins a lifelong struggle with negative mental, behavioral, and physical health outcomes.² Having 3 or more ACEs is typically the threshold for these negative outcomes. Recent data suggest that more than 40% of Maryland children have at least one ACE— 15.4% have had two or more.³

The CDC estimates lifetime costs associated with ACEs at approximately \$2 trillion nationwide. Enacting measures that prevent and address childhood trauma not only work to improve the public health of our state, but also have a high rate of return on investment and decrease healthcare, education, and welfare program costs in the long term.

The Trauma Informed Commission established in HB 548 ensures that our state provide trauma informed services in a coordinated way to Maryland's children and families. It will be incredibly valuable for Commission members to receive ongoing training on trauma, as well, and MAP hopes that education will trickle down to service providers across the State.

¹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:
[https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/childabuseandneglect/acestudy/index.html?](https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/childabuseandneglect/acestudy/index.html?CDC_AA_refVal=h)
CDC_AA_refVal=h

<https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/facestudy/index.html>

² Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:

https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/can/CAN-factsheet_2020.pdf

³ Baltimore Sun. More than 40 percent of Maryland children experience traumatic events. October 19, 2017.

Maryland must continue to enact policies that that help to improve outcomes for Marylanders who have experienced trauma. **MAP appreciates your consideration and urges a favorable report on HB 548.**

***Marylanders Against Poverty (MAP)** is a coalition of service providers, faith communities, and advocacy organizations advancing statewide public policies and programs necessary to alleviate the burdens faced by Marylanders living in or near poverty, and to address the underlying systemic causes of poverty.*