



## TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 443

### Maryland Corps Program - Revisions

House Appropriations Committee

February 8, 2022

Submitted by Julia Gross and Kali Schumitz, Co-Chairs

#### Member Agencies:

211 Maryland

Advocates for Children and Youth

Baltimore Jewish Council

Behavioral Health System Baltimore

CASH Campaign of Maryland

Catholic Charities

Energy Advocates

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

Laurel Advocacy & Referral Services,  
Inc.

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

Mental Health Association of  
Maryland

Paul's Place

Public Justice Center

St. Vincent de Paul of Baltimore

Welfare Advocates

#### Marylanders Against Poverty

Julia Gross, Co-Chair

P: 410-528-0021x6029

E: [jgross@mdhungersolutions.org](mailto:jgross@mdhungersolutions.org)

Kali Schumitz, Co-Chair

P: 410-412- 9105 ext 701

E: [kschumitz@mdeconomy.org](mailto:kschumitz@mdeconomy.org)

**Marylanders Against Poverty (MAP) supports HB 443**, which revises and strengthens the Maryland Corps Program.

**Year-of-service programs are common way non-profits engage young adults in social service careers, and strengthening the Maryland Corps program creates more opportunities for placements.** Many MAP members ourselves are alumni of year-of-service programs, and embarked on careers in service because of our experiences in various year-of-service programs, like Americorps. These programs offer an opportunity for young adults to explore community-oriented and service-oriented career pathways. However, for the past few years, many year-of-service programs have seen a drop in enrollment due to rising student loan debt, rising costs of housing, and lack of financial incentives and supports offered in year-of-service programs.

**The supports proposed by HB 443 – including offering a minimum wage of \$15/hr, health insurance, and wraparound services – would increase opportunities for nonprofits to host year-of-service corps members.** Several MAP organizations have traditionally hosted year-of-service members, and we are excited about the possibilities this new Maryland Corps revamp could bring, especially in allowing individuals from various socio-economic background to participate. In particular, the education award and in-state tuition are critically important incentives for corps members. Additionally, we support the added language to promote environmental, social, and racial justice through the program, and the goal to create strong bonds between cohort Corps members. Research demonstrates that year-of-service program positively impact communities and participants by strengthening civic engagement, equity, and connection to community.<sup>1</sup> Consequently, the changes proposed in HB 443 make serving for a year in Maryland Corps not only meaningful, but also provide the supports necessary for participants to build strong careers with livable wages and benefits.

**MAP appreciates your consideration and urges the committee to issue a favorable report for HB 443.**

\*\*\*

**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.**

<sup>1</sup> Journal of Policy Analysis and Management. 2009. Inside National Service: AmeriCorps' Impact on Participants. Vol 28, Issue 3.