



SB228 – Maryland Corps Program - Revisions

Testimony before

Senate Budget and Taxation Committee

February 9, 2022

Position: Favorable with Amendments

Mr. Chair, Mr. Vice Chair and members of the committee, my name is Richard Deutschmann, and I represent the 750+ members of Indivisible Howard County. We are providing written testimony today in **support of SB228 with Amendments**, to make changes to the existing Maryland Corps program, and establish a Civilian Climate Corps focused more on green jobs and justice. Indivisible Howard County is an active member of the Maryland Legislative Coalition (with 30,000+ members). We appreciate the leadership of Senate President Ferguson for sponsoring this important legislation.

This bill makes some important changes to the Maryland Corps program, creating a new, Civilian Climate Corps that is focused on good paying jobs for our youth and underemployed residents, adding an educational component, clarifying wraparound services to be included, and providing some positive direction to the types of projects that will be part of the Corps. We especially love the goal of “creating a strong annual cohort bond of unity for the program participants from urban, rural and suburban areas of the state”, as a foundation that is desperately needed in this era of division.

However, we understand from our allies at the Sunrise Movement (who has been at the core of this central tenant of the Green New Deal movement) that there is more that is needed in this bill. We would refer you to their testimony. Some of the items that Sunrise would like to see amended onto this bill include –

1. Additional language to further focus this program specifically on climate change
2. Guaranteeing the right for participants to collectively organize, and to be able to politically organize outside of work hours
3. Better coordination with Chairman Pinsky’s Climate Solutions Now bill, to identify clean energy jobs and climate justice projects.

For these reasons, we support the goals of SB228, as a huge step in the right direction for the Maryland Corps program. And we urge the committee to amend this bill to strengthen the language and provide further focus to ensure that we are mobilizing the Corps to truly fight climate change and build resiliency in our most at-risk communities. Thank you for your consideration of this important legislation.

We respectfully urge a favorable committee report with Amendments.

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