

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT

with Amendments

Testimony to the Budget & Taxation Committee
in amended support of
Senate Bill 805: Income Tax – Child Tax Credit – Alterations and Sunset Extension
March 9, 2022

Strong Schools Maryland urges a favorable vote on an amended Senate Bill 805: Income Tax – Child Tax Credit – Alterations and Sunset Extension.

The Blueprint for Maryland’s Future envisions a world-class system of public schools for our state’s students. The Kirwan Commission’s far-ranging research in early childhood education led them to make recommendations that function outside of the traditional K-12 system. Similarly, the General Assembly saw fit to support policies that invest in Judy and Patty centers, recognizing the intergenerational benefit of supporting entire families with young children early on. Further, both the Commission and the General Assembly prioritized addressing the impacts of concentrated poverty on student and school success.

Senate Bill 805 seeks to expand the eligibility for the state child tax credit to families earning up to \$15,000 annually and those with children under the age of six, regardless of the child(ren)’s disability status. We understand the intended outcome of this bill to be beneficial for families and expect that decreasing familial poverty will contribute to long-term positive outcomes for children in the state.

However, we also see several key opportunities to broaden the impact of the legislation via amendment:

- Require the State Comptroller to widely publicize this tax credit eligibility information in at least the top five widely-used languages in Maryland
- Require the State Comptroller and/or State Department of Education to share this information directly with child care and early education providers across the state (including Patty and Judy Centers), to increase the likelihood that eligible Marylanders will know of and take advantage of this benefit
- Require the State Comptroller to collaborate with trusted groups to address inequitable access to such benefits in vulnerable (particularly immigrant and mixed-status) communities

Senate Bill 805 would go a long way towards creating the world-class system of education our children deserve—by first extending benefits to families experiencing deep poverty in Maryland. There is much more that can and should be done to strengthen the sentiment of this bill, and so we respectfully urge an amended favorable report on the bill.

Thank you,

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