



February 9, 2022

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SUPPORT: SB228 - Maryland Corps Expansion and Revisions

Chairman Guzzone, Chairman Pinsky and Members of the Committees:

Maryland LCV strongly supports SB228 - Maryland Corps Expansion and Revisions and we thank President Ferguson for his leadership on this issue.

Maryland LCV works at the intersection of strong climate policy and environmental justice. This bill supports both of those interests.

SB228 and its House cross-file recognizes the unnecessary barriers to participation in the Maryland Corps funded programs, largely based on insufficient monetary stipends and benefits, and seeks to eliminate those barriers. In so doing, the bill opens opportunities for education and experience offered by Maryland Corps to those who would be otherwise unable to take place in these service years. These improvements to the program root this program in principles of equity and inclusion, ensuring workforce development and training in conservation careers for a greater number of Marylanders.

Additionally, this bill expands the opportunities under the Maryland Corps programs to direct participants to a much wider range of career opportunities, including in our state parks and Department of Natural Resources, as well as historic trades; professions which will be necessary as we build our states response to climate change in both the natural and built environments.

We encourage the sponsor and the Committees to look at additional ways to ensure that the principles of equity and justice are served in this bill, including worker protections and prioritizing recruitment of youth from communities of color.

Maryland LCV strongly urges a favorable report on this important bill.