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February 7, 2022  
Subject: Senate Bill 0228—Maryland Corps Program Alterations  
Stance: Support

Greetings,

My name is Ronald Stubblefield. I am a former Baltimore Corps Social Equity Fellow Alum. I am writing this letter in support of Senate Bill 0228.

My support of this Bill stems from my life's journey up to this point. Growing up in Montgomery County, MD, I was able to participate in many service learning projects, which enabled me to graduate with a Certificate of Meritorious Service from the State. These experiences shaped my academic journey, exposing me to various land conservancy projects, engineering projects, and community advocacy initiatives. The skills and perspectives I gained through these experiences guided my professional journey to serve as an economic development professional and thought leader within the Maryland Economic Development community and throughout the nation.

As I got older and worked throughout the country, I noticed how many students, especially from historically underestimated backgrounds due to income and race, were not able to have comparable experiences. I am an African-American man whose parents were middle class in an environment where service opportunities were both available and accessible to me. For my high school classmates, we didn't have to worry about anything but taking advantage of opportunities to make us more competitive for college admissions through public service. Outside this sheltered bubble, too many youth I have worked with in my career are unable to engage in service based programming because of issues such as housing and food insecurity necessitating they work in lieu of service, unreliable transportation making getting to these opportunities impracticable, lack of healthcare resources to ensure people are in the best possible position to gain from said opportunities, , to turning opportunities down because it is not structured in a way to support their educational goals. This listing is not meant to be dispositive. Rather it is to illustrate the point that the current system of public service for our youth is in fact inequitable and that correcting this inequity is not only the right thing to do morally, but it is a powerful education workforce development tool that builds a better and more inclusive Maryland while addressing achievement gaps that Dr. Ivory Toldson, whom the State heard from during the Kirwan process, notes it is critical to achieving educational equity.

Given this Bill works towards equity, increases civic engagement, and advances Maryland's economic development goals through increased educational and workforce competitiveness, supporting this Bill is easy

Please let me know if you have any additional questions on this topic.

Very Respectfully,

Ronald Stubblefield