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TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 1011

Conditions of Pretrial Release – Home Detention Monitoring – Alterations and Extension

House Judiciary Committee

February 22, 2022

Submitted by Julia Gross and Kali Schumitz, Co-Chairs

Marylanders Against Poverty (MAP) strongly supports HB 1011, which will extend the sunset clause the [Maryland Judiciary's Pretrial Home Detention Payment Program](#) from June 2022 to June 2025.

This program was created to cover the cost of home electronic monitoring for all indigent defendants while awaiting trial, ensuring that these individuals are not pushed further into debt or incarcerated while participating in private home detention programs throughout the state.

In order to participate in court-ordered home detention programs, defendants must often pay fees upwards of \$500 per month. On top of that, setup fees, taxes, or other extraneous charges push that cost even higher. Without assistance, defendants living in poverty are forced to choose between falling further into debt or risking the consequences of violating the conditions of their release, which could result in incarceration. Knowing that those with a criminal record already face significant obstacles to employment, even small debts can be impossible for these individuals to repay, creating a system that exacerbates this cycle and criminalization of poverty.

Last year, the Maryland General Assembly passed legislation establishing a uniquely efficient and effective program that allows the court to foot the bill for any individual who qualifies for a public defender. As it stands, this program is set to expire on June 30th, 2022. HB 1011 seeks to address this issue by expanding the payment program to June 30th, 2025. This will ensure that indigent individuals do not fall further into poverty for their inability to pay excessive privatized home detention fees.

For these reasons, MAP appreciates your consideration and urges the committee to issue a favorable report for HB 1011.

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.