



TESTIMONY FOR SB0228 MARYLAND CORPS - REVISIONS

Bill Sponsor: Senator Ferguson

Committee: Budget and Taxation

Organization Submitting: Maryland Legislative Coalition

Person Submitting: Cecilia Plante, co-chair

Position: FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS

I am submitting this testimony in favor of SB0228 on behalf of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. The Maryland Legislative Coalition is an association of activists - individuals and grassroots groups in every district in the state. We are unpaid citizen lobbyists, and our Coalition supports well over 30,000 members.

This bill revises the Maryland Corps program to engage students in their local communities and provide experience in environmental projects and programs. The expansion of this program will have great benefit for the youth of our state and show how committed the state is to supporting and preserving our environment. The program provides good jobs at a \$15 minimum wage, includes health insurance, and wraparound services.

However, it does not identify the right projects in green energy and climate justice. Instead, it limits the program to cover parks staffing shortages. The Maryland Legislative Coalition respectfully suggests that this is such an amazing and transformative program that the projects covered by the program should be expanded to explicitly include "Clean energy projects and Climate Justice Projects."

We are also aware that the Climate Solutions Now Act contains provisions for a Civilian Climate Corps that contains the expansive definition of projects we feel is necessary, but does not deliver on providing good jobs - which this bill does.

We encourage the Committee Chair and Senate President to work closely with Senator Pinsky to synergize the best aspects of these two bills to ensure that the version of the Civilian Climate Corps that passes this session creates the jobs benefits that are in this bill and allows for a much more expansive definition of projects, as in the Climate Solutions Now bill.

We also suggest some additions to this bill to guarantee the right for corps members to organize for collective bargaining and strike. Additionally, corps members should be allowed to organize politically outside of working hours. We feel that it is important to guarantee that the new wave of green collar jobs are good jobs, and the way to ensure they will stay that way is by empowering green collar workers through civic rights such as collective bargaining and political organizing.

Finally, we suggest making any Climate Corps program open to all ages, prioritizing young people, historically marginalized, and working-class groups in hiring.

The Maryland Legislative Coalition supports this bill and we recommend a **FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS** report in Committee.