

**Written Testimony Submitted for the Record to the
Maryland House of Delegates
Ways and Means Committee
For the Hearing on
Maryland Association of Environmental and Outdoor
Education Grant - Funding and Evaluation – Extension (HB 531)
February 17, 2022**

SUPPORT

Free State PTA represents over 34,000 volunteer members and families in over 500 public schools. Free State PTA is comprised of families, students, teachers, administrators, and business as well as community leaders devoted to the educational success of children and family engagement in Maryland. As the state’s premier and largest child advocacy organization, Free State PTA is a powerful voice for all children, a relevant resource for families, schools and communities and a strong advocate for public education.

Free State PTA submits this testimony *in support* of House Bill 531 – Maryland Association of Environmental and Outdoor Education Grant - Funding and Evaluation – Extension. This bill requires extending the number of fiscal years for which the Governor must include a certain amount in the State budget for increasing the number of green schools in the state; extending the annual evaluation of the impact of the funds appropriated under this Act on increasing the number of green schools in the State; and generally relating to green schools such as:

1. Supporting professional development, assisting with transportation of students to and from environmentally focused activities, or supporting school projects that incorporate environmental best practices for waste and recycling, energy conservation, water conservation, schoolyard habitat, outdoor classrooms, transportation, or health;
2. Increasing the number of environmental educators in the State who will provide green schools training and assist schools with becoming a green school;
3. Supporting statewide green school events;
4. Conducting an annual evaluation of the impact of the funds upon increasing the number of green schools in the State and
5. Creating an online application form for a school to apply to get funding.

Such actions are consistent with our PTA position of recognizing the growing importance of environmental issues and the impact they have on the health and welfare of children and their families. PTA members have a responsibility to promote environmental health and safety, and to help protect our world’s finite natural resources. The Free State PTA promotes environmental education programs in pre-Kindergarten through higher education including educating students on climate and energy literacy and human sustainability.

According to Maryland Association for Environmental and Outdoor Education (MAEOE), “an environmentally literate person, both individually and together with others, makes informed decisions concerning the environment; is willing to act on these decisions to improve the well-being of other individuals, societies, and the global environment; and participates in civic life.” Accordingly, House Bill 531 cares for students by supporting the work of MAEOE and

The mission of PTA is to make every child’s potential a reality by
engaging and empowering families and communities to advocate for all children. Page 1

providing needed environmental education that affects many areas of their lives and provide for knowledge and tools for being good stewards of the environment which can in turn contribute to good health and means for success.

Free State PTA speaks up for every child, and this legislation improves education for Maryland children by learning about the environment and becoming good stewards of the natural resources which directly impact everyone's health and wellbeing. Our Association urges the recognition of changing climate, the impact of human activities on the environment, and promotion environmental education. This bill underscores the needed resources for such understanding and training for students. It is for these reasons above that Free State PTA urges a favorable vote in support of House Bill 531.

Testimony is presented on the behalf of

Marla Posey-Moss

Marla Posey-Moss, President

Free State Parent Teacher Association

president.fsptamd@gmail.com