

TESTIMONY ON HB 1211
Neighborhood Indicators of Poverty
House Appropriations Committee
March 10, 2023

SUPPORT

My name is Susan Allen, a resident of Anne Arundel County, a volunteer with the Maryland Poor People's Campaign, and I strongly support **HB 1211, Neighborhood Indicators of Poverty**, because it will ensure that funding for the Blueprint law will **reach children in economically distressed communities—not just wealthier school districts.**

The Maryland Poor People's Campaign is committed to raising Maryland children out of poverty and we have assessed HB 1211 as a **major tool in lifting up children in low-wealth neighborhoods**. This bill's change to the Blueprint funding formula recognizes that **the State can't rely on a single factor** like free-school meal eligibility to identify children in poverty.

All Legislators know that 100,000 Maryland children were "suddenly" identified as poor when Medicaid eligibility was added as a factor (The Washington Post, Section B, Friday, February 27, 2023, p. 1).

The State Superintendent Mohammed Choudhury has shown courage in proposing that the State use **neighborhood level data to account for the varying levels of poverty in which children live**. The students who live in the most economically distressed areas perform at the bottom of educational achievement.

The Superintendent wants HB1211 passed to **level the funding field** for these children who have no voices—unlike the children of wealthy parents who agitate constantly for their children's share.

I do not want to live in a state that deals with child poverty but **refusing to "see" it because we will not measure poverty accurately and fairly.**

Yes, this HB 1211 will cost the State additional millions to give help to poor children.

Let's raise this money by aggressively reforming our tax laws and collecting tax money from corporations and others who are not paying their share.

Respectfully,
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