



TESTIMONY TO THE HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

HB1211 Education – Compensatory Education – Maryland Neighborhood Tier System Calculation

POSITION: Support

BY: Nancy Soreng, President

Date: March 14, 2023

The League of Women Voters of Maryland (LWVMD) is a nonpartisan organization that works to influence public policy through education and advocacy. LWVMD supported the passage of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future (Blueprint) and continues to monitor and support the implementation of the Blueprint. LWVMD supports programs and reforms that promote equal access to quality education and provide adequate funding so all students can learn.

LWVMD supports HB1211 Education – Compensatory Education – Maryland Neighborhood Tier System Calculation. This bill would establish tiers of funding for schools based on five weighted tiers of poverty. Tier "1" represents the lowest level of poverty and "5" is the most extreme, which would generate the highest level of funding under this tiered system. This bill uses Census block data on median household income, average educational attainment, homeownership rate, and percentage of single-family households to determine the tier level for each student. These tiers function as multipliers in the state education funding formula: the more economically disadvantaged the neighborhood, the higher the funding allocation for the students living there.

This bill is important for two reasons. First, poverty is growing in Maryland. The percentage of students qualifying for Free and Reduced-Priced Meals (a measure of poverty) increased from 34% in the 2007-08 school year to 54% in the 2022-23 school year. This bill, by capturing the conditions of where students live, would direct more resources to those needing it most. Since poverty is unevenly distributed across the state, it would better capture concentrated poverty in both rural and urban areas. Second, by establishing tiers of poverty, this bill would adjust the Blueprint funding formula by directing funding to schools based on their level of concentrated funding. It is a step towards adequately funding

We urge a favorable report on HB1211.