



NAACP

Maryland

STATE CONFERENCE

Testimony of Willie Flowers; President NAACP Maryland State Conference

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 628/SB 557

Primary and Secondary Education – Breakfast and Lunch Programs – Universal Expansion

House Ways and Means Committee/Senate Budget & Taxation Committee

February 22, 2023

THE NAACP MARYLAND STATE CONFERENCE SUPPORTS HB-628/SB-557. THE SUBSTANCE OF THE BILL CREATES AN OPPORTUNITY TO CREATE ACCESS TO SCHOOL LUNCHES FOR ALL STUDENTS WHO ATTEND PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

AS YOU KNOW, THE GOAL OF PROVIDING BREAKFAST AND LUNCH TO STUDENTS IS IMPORTANT FOR STUDENTS TO REMAIN HEALTHY AND TO AVOID HUNGER DURING THE SCHOOL DAY. EVEN DURING SEGREGATION THE AFRICAN AMERICAN PUBLIC SCHOOL MOVEMENT PROVIDED FOR AND NOURISHMENT DURING THE SEGREGATION PERIOD THAT SENDS A MESSAGE THAT OFFERING BREAKFAST AND LUNCH HAS ALWAYS BEEN IMPORTANT.

THIS BILL RESTORES THE PRACTICE SO THAT ALL STUDENTS WILL HAVE BREAKFAST AND LUNCH DURING THE SCHOOL DAY.

THE STATE OF MARYLAND SHOULD PROVIDE SCHOOL BREAKFAST AND LUNCH FOR ALL STUDENTS. THE APPROACH ALLOWS STUDENTS WHO LIVE WITH THE STIGMA OF FREE AND REDUCED LUNCHES BECAUSE OF ALL STUDENTS ARE PROVIDED ACCESS THERE WILL BE NO SHAME WHEN IT COMES TO BEING SINGLED OUT FOR THE TERM FARMS OR FREE AND REDUCED. OVERALL THIS IS A GOOD STEP TO NEUTRALIZE THOSE UNSPOKEN OF CHALLENGES.

THE MOST IMPORTANT ASPECT OF THE BILL WAS THAT NOURISHMENT GIVES THE OPPORTUNITY FOR STUDENTS TO ACHIEVE ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE IN SCHOOL.

FINALLY, DURING THIS TIME OF CHALLENGE AND WHEN FAMILIES ARE IN NEED OF SUPPORT AND ASSISTANCE TO REDUCE EXPENSES THIS IS AN EXCELLENT POLICY TO PROVIDE INDIRECT FINANCIAL CAPACITY TO FAMILIES.

NAACP

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WITH HB-628/SB-557 WE HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO PROVIDE A SERVICE FOR STUDENTS AND FAMILIES SO THAT EQUITY AND ACCESS TO FOOD CAN BE AN EXPECTATION FOR THE BETTERMENT OF PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

IT IS ALSO SPECIAL TO ACKNOWLEDGE THE WORK OF THE EDDIE CONWAY. IN HIS WORK WITH THE BALTIMORE CITY BLACK PANTHER PARTY CHAPTER HE LED THE FREE BREAKFAST PROGRAM THAT INSPIRED THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT TO FUND FREE BREAKFAST AND LUNCH. THIS BILL EXTENDS HIS LEGACY OF SUPPORTING CHILDREN OF BALTIMORE CITY.