



**Testimony in support of  
House Bill 185: Nonpublic Schools and Child Care Providers – Corporal  
Punishment – Prohibition**

**Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee**

**Position: Favorable**

March 22, 2023

Strong Schools Maryland is a network of education advocates dedicated to ensuring the full funding and faithful implementation of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future. We advocate for legislative and regulatory policy changes to further educational equity and build the technical capacity of everyday Marylanders to hold state and local officials accountable to their responsibilities. **We stand in support of House Bill 185**, which if enacted, would effectively eliminate the use of corporal punishment in nonpublic schools and in child care centers in Maryland.

Corporal punishment is a discipline method in which an adult purposefully inflicts pain on a child in response to a child's behavior. According to the World Health Organization, corporal punishment has many harmful, long lasting health implications, including physical and mental ill-health, impaired cognitive and socio-emotional development, poor educational outcomes, increased aggression and perpetration of violence.<sup>1</sup> Far more effective and healthy practices exist, including the Restorative Justice method of discussion and problem solving.

The passage of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future began a new period in Maryland's journey to achieve educational equity, especially with regard to

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<sup>1</sup> [World Health Organization. 2021](#)

early learning. The Blueprint established publicly-funded, full day pre-kindergarten in the state so that all children are ready to learn and be successful when they enter kindergarten. The Pre-Kindergarten Expansion Grant Program includes private providers, who must ensure that a certain percentage of their four-year-old and three-year-old slots are filled using grant funds. The Blueprint also created more funding for childcare for our state's families by raising the income requirements for the Child Care Scholarship (CCS) Program. These and other early learning policies create more opportunities for families to gain access to affordable, high-quality options for their children. State funding should not be available to nonpublic schools or child care providers that do not hold any policy prohibiting corporal punishment.

The Blueprint's vision of equitable practices and student outcomes is incompatible with harmful disciplinary practices anywhere, least of all in nonpublic schools and child care facilities.

**For these reasons, we urge a favorable report on House Bill 185.**

*For more information, please contact Maddie Long*  
[maddie@strongschoolsmaryland.org](mailto:maddie@strongschoolsmaryland.org)