

HB694: Governor's Office for Children - Engaging Neighborhoods, Organizations, Unions,
Governments, and Households (ENOUGH) Grant Program (ENOUGH Act of 2024)

February 28, 2024

SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENTS

TO: The Honorable Ben Barnes, Chair; The Honorable Mark S. Chang, Vice Chair; and Members
of the Appropriations Committee

FROM: Summer Cook, Montgomery County Resident

Hello. My name is Summer Cook and I am a lifetime resident of Rockville, Maryland. I want to thank Governor Moore for introducing this legislation and the Appropriations Committee for considering this bill. Thank you for the opportunity to speak in support of the ENOUGH Act.

As a lower-income single mom who has struggled to make ends, I strongly support the ENOUGH Act. This bill would provide much needed support to programs that are working to reduce child poverty – programs like the Montgomery County Community Action Agency, which has had a significant impact on my life.

I have been fortunate to have my taxes prepared by the Montgomery County Community Action Agency's Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program for twelve years. The program connected me with the Earned Income Tax Credit, Child Tax Credit, and other credits that I was eligible for, which really increased my tax refunds and helped me pay for basic necessities. I was also able to save enough money from my tax refunds over the years for a downpayment on a house where my daughter and I currently live.

In addition to the VITA program, I was in the Head Start program and my daughter was in Head Start. The Community Action Agency oversees the County's Head Start grant and many Community Action Agencies in the state operate Head Start programs directly. I am sure you are all aware of the incredible impact that Head Start has had on reducing poverty and improving outcomes for the millions of children nationwide who have participated in the program since its creation in the 60s.

As someone who has received services from a Community Action Agency, I know firsthand the impact that these programs have. I therefore strongly recommend an amendment to the bill that would allocate half of the funding to Community Action Agencies, which have been working to reduce child poverty for nearly 60 years.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. I strongly support the ENOUGH Act and ask the Committee for your support.

