

**Testimony on ENOUGH (Engaging Neighborhoods, Organizations, Unions, Governments, and Households) Act: HB 694/SB 482**

**Presented by: Kevin Beverly**

**Organization: Moving Dorchester Forward: Dorchester County's Local Management Board**

Thank You for the opportunity to speak to you today. I'm Kevin Beverly. I come before you today having had a successful career as the CEO of a multi-national public health research company. My pathway was not an easy one. Today I represent Moving Dorchester Forward, The ENOUGH Act offers an opportunity to bring additional funds into Maryland's underserved communities like Dorchester County to increase the health and safety of the community, provide "cradle to career" access to education, connect residents to quality jobs, and provide additional supports to our most vulnerable children.

I grew up in poverty on a small island in Dorchester County. Dorchester County has the 2<sup>nd</sup> highest rate of child poverty on the Eastern Shore and in Cambridge (County Seat) 1 out of 2 children live in poverty. The County suffers from both generational and situational poverty where more minority children and families are impacted by generational poverty, while more seniors are suffering from situational poverty. Why is this so significant? This is our next generation workforce and they will be ill prepared to participate in our economy if we don't provide them with the basic tools for success. This is significant because those living in poverty or our children who are growing up in poverty have unmet nutritional needs, live in substandard housing, are experiencing trauma because of the elevated levels of crime and violence in their neighborhoods, lack basic health care and are underperforming academically.

Moving Dorchester Forward plays a critical role in our community acting as the neutral convener of a cross-sector of stakeholders including our child serving agencies, private philanthropic partners and MOST importantly our children and families with lived experience. We clearly understand that community voice and youth voice play a critical role in not only identifying needs but more importantly identifying the right strategies and implementing those strategies. Our three-year plan (2024-2026) Community Plan outlines a plan to create a thriving community for all. Our main purpose is to connect people, bridge gaps and build community partnerships to improve the overall quality of life for Dorchester County residents.

PLEASE SUPPORT ENOUGH ACT. The \$15,000,000 will provide Maryland communities with much-needed resources to attack poverty from every angle, breaking the cycle of poverty for Maryland's most valuable resource, our children. Thank you for your time and attention.