

SB0370 - Maryland Legal Aid - FAV.pdf

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Position: FAV



MARYLAND
LEGAL AID

Advancing
Human Rights and
Justice for All

SB 370

Community Schools - Rental Assistance for Community School Families Program and Fund - Establishment

Hearing of the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee

Hearing on January 31, 2024

Position: FAVORABLE

Maryland Legal Aid (MLA) submits its written and oral testimony on SB 370 at the request of bill sponsor Senator Shelly L. Hettleman.

MLA is a nonprofit law firm that provides free and direct civil legal services to Maryland's low-income and vulnerable individuals and families. Housing is the most prominent legal issue that we address. In 2023, our Tenants' Right to Counsel Project provided representation to tenants in over 2,000 cases. Over half of these cases involved families with children. Based on experience with these Marylanders, we know that rental assistance funding is critically important. MLA asks that the Committee report **favorably** on SB 370.

SB 370 establishes the Rental Assistance for Community School Families program to provide rental assistance to eligible student households at community schools, to be administered by the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE). Research firm Stout Risius Ross recently found that every dollar spent on eviction prevention saves the State of Maryland \$2.39.¹ SB 370's investment in eviction prevention funding has the potential to save Maryland from expenditures on costs related to shelter, assistance to students experiencing homelessness, health care, and foster care, as well as incarceration.

Each [Community School](#) throughout the state of Maryland stands as an invaluable asset to its student body and the neighborhoods they serve. These schools dutifully provide services that span the spectrum of social problems school families may encounter as a barrier to learning.

Community schools work as a hub for access to fresh and nutritious food, physical or mental health care, or transportation. An eviction can cause students and their families to lose access to these vital services provided by their community school. For this reason, **eviction prevention funding is a necessary component in community schools' programming.**

Almost 40% of our clients in 2023 reported that they fell behind on rent and faced eviction because of a job loss or reduction in hours. Rental assistance can keep these clients housed and their students in school. Although MLA is a legal services organization that does not directly provide rental assistance, 12% of our clients state that their goal in our legal representation is to help secure rental assistance, which we succeed in doing often by defeating eviction cases or negotiating with

¹ Stout Risius Ross, Assessment of Maryland's Need for Eviction Prevention Funds (EPF) and the Estimated Fiscal Impact of EPF (2023).

landlords to provide the time to complete the rental assistance process. However, MLA cannot represent every family in this situation, and therefore this bill is welcome relief.

Educational and community stability

Eviction prevention funds can stabilize Maryland students, their families, their schools, and their communities. Over 40% of MLA’s clients tell us that if they are evicted, they will have to double-up with friends or family, find a shelter, or live unsheltered. Another 3% would have to leave the state entirely. This level of housing insecurity harms school performance and students’ individual educational attainment. “[C]hanging schools during the elementary school years predicts declines in classroom participation and academic performance.”² Students who face evictions are six times more likely to become recurrently absent.³ These students are also four times more likely not to complete high school.⁴ The National Center for Family Homelessness estimates that the graduation rate of children experiencing homelessness is less than 25 percent.⁵ Students navigating housing insecurity were found more likely to have a lower GPA and poorer mental health outcomes.

Disparate impact of eviction

Discriminatory housing policies have a long history in Maryland and have led to Black and Brown families being much more at risk of eviction. While “fewer than 1 in 5 renters in the United States are Black, about half of all evictions are against Black people.”⁶ Additionally, while 11% of children face eviction each year, that rate is 27% for Black children.⁷

A recent analysis of 38 million eviction cases showed “not only that the average evicted household includes one child, but that the most common age to experience eviction in America is during childhood.”⁸ Black-women-led households are also acutely impacted. This national study found that while “adult renters living with at least one child in their home were threatened with eviction at an annual rate of 10.4%, compared to 5.0% for those without children,” for Black women eviction filing rates were significantly higher: 28% with children present and 16% for those without children.⁹ Eviction prevention through rental assistance furthers gender and racial equity. Women-

² Diana Gurman et al., “Longitudinal Effects of Student Mobility on Three Dimensions of Elementary School Engagement,” *Child Dev.* (Nov.-Dec. 2008).

³ John W. Gardner Center for Youth and their Communities, *Housing Instability and Educational Outcomes of San Mateo County Youth* (2022).

⁴ Mariah Kornbluh, et al., *Exploring Housing Insecurity in Relation to Student Success*, *J. Am. Coll. Health.* (April 2022).

⁵ *Health Care for the Homeless, Homelessness in Maryland* (2023).

⁶ Albinson Linares, “Who’s most affected by rental evictions? Children, according to a new study,” *NBC News* (Oct. 19, 2023).

⁷ Nick Graetz et al., “A comprehensive demographic profile of the US evicted population,” *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America* (Oct. 2, 2023)

⁸ *Id.*

⁹ *Id.*

led (70%) and Black-led (74%) households have been able to avoid eviction through the current emergency rental assistance program.¹⁰

Unless the Governor and General Assembly act, these families will likely be evicted at much higher rates.

Programmatic structure

MLA recommends that SB 370 reinforce the programmatic structures that the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) and local agencies built to deliver almost \$800 million in federal rent relief during the COVID-19 emergency. The administrative burden cannot be shouldered by school staff alone. Instead, MSDE, DHCD, and other agencies should have roles that support Community School Coordinators in the field. The language of the bill may require revisions that accomplish this supportive structure.

MLA also recommends that the language of § 9.9–104.1(g)(6) of the bill (page 7:22-25), which describes a preference in determining eligibility for rental assistance, be revised to align better with the bill’s focus on assisting families who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless.

Families cannot thrive when their housing is jeopardized. Schools will not thrive with a transient student body. **For the reasons stated above, Maryland Legal Aid urges the passage of Senate Bill 370.**

If you have any questions, please contact Amanda Wisniewski, Equal Justice Works Organizing Fellow - Tenants’ Right to Counsel Project, at (443) 202-5384 or acwisniewski@mdlab.org, or Zafar Shah, Assistant Advocacy Director - Tenants’ Right to Counsel Project, at (443) 202-4478 or zshah@mdlab.org.



¹⁰ Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development, Emergency Rental Assistance Program Data Dashboard: Households Assisted by State ERAP (last accessed Jan. 30, 2024).

SB 370 Written Testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: Aneuri Castro

Position: FAV



SUPPORT OF SENATE BILL 370

**Community Schools – Rental Assistance for Community School Families
Program and Fund - Establishment
Senate Budget and Taxation Committee
Wednesday, January 31, 2024
FAVORABLE**

Dear Chairman Guzzone and members of the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee,

The University of Maryland School of Social Work's **Center for Restorative Change and The Positive Schools Center (Initiatives at the University)** strongly supports SB370 which will establish a rental assistance program for eligible community school families to receive funding to support the cost of rental and utility payments, rental and utility arrears, and late fees associated with rental and utility payments from a designated funds for up to twelve months. SB370 also establishes the responsibility of the Community School Coordinator to administer funds to eligible families.

The Positive School Center's mission is to create positive, supportive, and mindful learning communities where students and school staff connect, develop, and grow. Under the Positive Schools Center umbrella are community schools. The community school strategy is implemented all through Maryland, with 155 community schools in the city. The role of the Community School Coordinator is essential in holistically addressing the whole child and family. Community School Coordinators are an integral piece in analyzing community needs and addressing the gaps within systems. Community School Coordinators have strong relationships with school staff, students, families, and community members. They are the key person in ensuring that every stakeholder is set up for success.

SB 370 will increase the capacity of Community Schools to holistically support the needs of its families by going beyond academic services to support general family wellbeing. Community schools take on a multidisciplinary approach when it comes to addressing the whole child. Every community school has a student wellness team composed of instructional and support staff, including the community school coordinator. These teams work directly with students and their families to get a full understanding of their specific needs and contexts. Unfortunately, many times, these teams discover that our students are going through situations that are out of our control - particularly when there is financial hardship. In fact, in 2022, approximately 4,300 students in Baltimore City alone were experiencing homelessness. A staggering 33% increase from the previous year. Funds like those established by SB 370 would create a sustainable and reliable way for schools to better support those families.



SB 370 will increase family and academic engagement and performance to ensure greater equity in outcomes for Maryland's students.

Parents are often unaware of the resources available within the state and community because they often worry about various barriers. Due to financial barriers, families are less likely to attend school events and conferences. In addressing housing within community schools, Community School Coordinators would be able to boost overall student and family attendance by eliminating the stress factor of rental payments for the family and establishing a safe, supported household. Events and conferences include family literacy nights, wellness workshops, school family council meetings, and parent teacher conferences. These meetings are crucial for parents to attend so that they can receive any necessary support and/or resources, as well as being present in their students' education; however, when they are facing crippling financial issues, they often have to prioritize those needs over attending school-based meetings.

SB 370 will address transportation, safety concerns, and relocations for students and families. When students and families are evicted and have to relocate, they no longer have the support needed to thrive. Students and families lose essential resources provided by the school such as mental health services, academic supports, and after school programming/extended care. All of these resources are essential in ensuring that the student's needs are being met. With the use of rental assistance of up to 12 months, a family is able to maintain housing stability and maintain supports in place, or provide the school with enough time to create a transition plan.

Each community school leverages unique community resources to meet community needs, and maintains a core focus on children, while recognizing that children grow up in families, and that children are integral parts of communities. This integrated approach with the addition of rental assistance in community schools, will lead to student success, strong families, and healthy communities. Thank you for taking the time to listen and address the much needed change needed in our school communities.

Sincerely,

Aneuri Castro, LMSW, Assistant Director of Community Schools

Asya Louis, LMSW, Assistant Director of Community Schools

University of Maryland School of Social Work

The Center for Restorative Change

Positive Schools Center

55 N. Paca St

Baltimore, MD 21201

SB 370 Eviction Prevention in Community Schools Te

Uploaded by: Brenna Olson

Position: FAV



SB 370 – Community Schools - Rental Assistance for Community School Families Program and Fund - Establishment

Hearing of the Budget and Taxation Committee, January 31, 2024

Position: Favorable

Shepherd's Table urges you to support SB 370, which will create an eviction prevention funds program for families with children enrolled in Maryland's community schools.

Shepherd's Table is a direct and social services organization in downtown Silver Spring that has provided hot, nutritious, free meals to the unhoused and low-income community since 1983. Approximately 80% of our meal guests live in shelters or do not have a guaranteed place to sleep each night. With the rising number of evictions in Montgomery County, as well as the increase in our unhoused neighbors, Shepherd's Table knows that **eviction prevention is homelessness prevention**. As part of our work with the Montgomery County Racial Equity Network, we also participate in weekly rent court-watching efforts and observe that many tenants are families with young children. Each week, eviction court dockets have had upwards of 500 names, and our meal services have also had a record number of guests in recent months, causing us to extend meal times well past their usual hours. Housing and food insecurity are deeply linked, and both are on the rise in the state of Maryland.

The Blueprint for Maryland's Future is investing significant funds to assist families whose children are attending community schools. Located throughout Maryland, [Community Schools](#) support families by coordinating wraparound services like transportation, healthcare, counseling, and healthy food. **Without an investment in eviction prevention funds, students in community schools who are evicted will lose ready access to the support of their community school.**

Recent research also shows that preventing evictions stabilizes the family, the school, and the community. Students facing eviction are six times more likely to be chronically absent and four times more likely to not complete high school,¹ and students who have experienced housing insecurity were more likely to have a lower GPA as well as poorer mental health outcomes.² The National Center on Family Homelessness estimates that the graduation rate of children experiencing homelessness is less than 25%.³ **Families cannot thrive without safe, stable housing. Schools cannot thrive with a student body forced to live in unstable and deplorable conditions.**

[According to a recent research report by Stout Risius Ross on eviction prevention funds in Maryland, a fully funded program would more than pay for itself. Every dollar spent on eviction prevention saves the State \\$2.39.](#) A full \$40 million investment in eviction prevention would yield approximately \$92 million in cost savings or avoidance for the State by reducing homelessness and state-funded safety net costs

related to shelter, assisting students experiencing homelessness, health care, foster care, decreased incarceration, and the economic impacts of increased employment and income stability. **On education alone, Stout estimated that a fully funded eviction prevention funds program (about \$40 million) would provide \$23.75 million in benefits to the State through better student education outcomes and increased federal funds.**

Eviction prevention through rental assistance furthers gender and racial equity. Women-led (70%) and Black-led (74%) households have avoided eviction with help from the state's current emergency rental assistance program. They likely will be evicted at much higher rates unless the Governor and General Assembly take immediate action.

We understand that the bill sponsor, Sen. Hettleman, will work with advocates, the Maryland State Dept. of Education, and the Dept. of Housing and Community Development to refine the program's administrative structure and minimize the burden on community school coordinators. We also understand and support changing the current prioritization in the bill to address better the needs of families who are homeless or most at risk of homelessness.

Maryland cannot be a national leader in “leaving no one behind,” ending childhood poverty, righting the racial wrongs of the past, and ensuring shelter for all without investing in eviction prevention funds.

Shepherd's Table **urges you to move favorably on SB 370.**

For more information, contact our Advocacy Coordinator Brenna Olson at bolson@shepherdstable.org

¹ <https://gardnercenter.stanford.edu/publications/study-homeless-and-highly-mobile-students-san-mateo-county/housing-instability-and>

² Mariah Kornbluh, et al., Exploring Housing Insecurity in Relation to Student Success, J Am Coll Health, Apr. 2022.

³ Health Care for the Homeless, Homelessness in Maryland, <https://www.hchmd.org/homelessness-maryland> (last visited Dec. 1, 2023).

SB0370_Rental_Assistance_for_Community_School_Fami

Uploaded by: Cecilia Plante

Position: FAV



**TESTIMONY FOR SB0370
COMMUNITY SCHOOLS – RENTAL ASSISTANCE FOR COMMUNITY SCHOOL
FAMILIES – PROGRAM AND FUND - ESTABLISHMENT**

Bill Sponsor: Senator Hettleman

Committee: Budget and Tax

Organization Submitting: Maryland Legislative Coalition

Person Submitting: Cecilia Plante, co-chair

Position: FAVORABLE

I am submitting this testimony in favor of SB0370 on behalf of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. The Maryland Legislative Coalition is an association of activists - individuals and grassroots groups in every district in the state. We are unpaid citizen lobbyists and our Coalition supports well over 30,000 members.

Supporting Marylanders who are struggling and on the verge of becoming homeless is a worthy goal for the state. Those who are marginalized and vulnerable should get our support. This bill, if enacted, would establish a fund for providing rental assistance to families in community schools.

Community schools already receive Concentration of Poverty Grants to support the education of children from poor families. However, if the family is unable to pay rent and becomes homeless, those children are even more at risk. This fund would identify families who are on the edge of becoming homeless by establishing a coordinator in each community school who would make a determination based on overdue rent notices, unemployment receipts, reports of unsafe living conditions, etc. The program would then provide rental and utility assistance, payment of back rent or utilities and any penalties or fines to the family of the student enrolled in the community school for a period of 12 months.

Our members understand that many people in our state struggle to meet basic needs and support the state's efforts to ensure that Marylanders are housed and that their children can be in an environment that supports their education.

We support this bill and recommend a **FAVORABLE** report in committee.

BEYOND THE BOUNDARIES--2024--SB 370 Eviction Preve

Uploaded by: Charles Michaels

Position: FAV

BEYOND THE BOUNDARIES

SB 370 – Community Schools - Rental Assistance for Community School Families Program and Fund - Establishment

Hearing of the Budget and Taxation Committee, January 31, 2024

Position: Favorable

Beyond the Boundaries urges you to support SB 370, which will create an eviction prevention funds program for families with children enrolled in Maryland’s community schools.

Beyond the Boundaries is an Archdiocesan program, consisting of parish members throughout the Archdiocese of Baltimore, and guided by a Steering Committee, with a mission to educate and advocate for affordable housing and stable or permanent housing for renters and other vulnerable populations.

The Blueprint for Maryland’s Future is investing significant funds to assist families whose children are attending community schools. Located throughout Maryland, [Community Schools](#) provide support for families by coordinating wraparound services like transportation, healthcare, counseling, and healthy food. **Without an investment in eviction prevention funds, students in community schools who are evicted will lose ready access to the support of their community school.**

Recent research is clear that preventing evictions stabilizes the family, the school, and the community. Students facing eviction are 6 times more likely to be chronically absent and 4 times more likely to not complete high school,¹ and students who have experienced housing insecurity were more likely to have a lower GPA as well as poorer mental health outcomes.² The National Center on Family Homelessness estimates that the graduation rate of children experiencing homelessness is less than 25%.³ **Families cannot thrive without safe, stable housing. Schools cannot thrive with a student body forced to live in unstable and deplorable conditions.**

[According to a recent research report by Stout Risius Ross on eviction prevention funds in Maryland, a fully funded program would more than pay for itself. Every dollar spent on eviction prevention saves the State \\$2.39.](#) million. A full \$40 million investment in eviction prevention would yield approximately \$92 million in cost savings or avoidance for the State by reducing homelessness and state-funded safety net costs related to shelter, assisting students experiencing homelessness, health care, foster care, decreased incarceration, and the economic impacts of increased employment and income stability. **On education alone, Stout estimated that a fully funded eviction prevention funds program (about \$40 million) would provide \$23.75 million in benefits to the State through better education outcomes for students and an increase in federal funds.**

Eviction prevention through rental assistance furthers gender and racial equity. Women-led (70%) and Black-led (74%) households have avoided eviction with help from the state’s current emergency rental assistance program and **likely will be evicted at much higher rates unless the Governor and General Assembly take action.**

We understand that the bill sponsor, Sen. Hettleman, will work with advocates, the Maryland State Dept. of Education, and the Dept. of Housing and Community Development to refine the administrative structure of the program and minimize the burden on community school coordinators. We also understand and support changing the current prioritization in the bill to better address the needs of families who are homeless or most at risk of homelessness.

Maryland cannot be a national leader in leaving no one behind, ending childhood poverty, righting the racial wrongs of the past, and ensuring shelter for all without investing in eviction prevention funds.

Thus, Beyond the Boundaries **urges you to vote favorable on SB 370. For more information contact:**

Charles Michaels, Esq.

Program Manager

Beyond the Boundaries

cwmichaels@igc.org

¹ <https://gardnercenter.stanford.edu/publications/study-homeless-and-highly-mobile-students-san-mateo-county/housing-instability-and>

² Mariah Kornbluh, et al., Exploring Housing Insecurity in Relation to Student Success, J Am Coll Health, Apr. 2022.

³ Health Care for the Homeless, Homelessness in Maryland, <https://www.hchmd.org/homelessness-maryland>(last visited Dec. 1, 2023).

CDN SB370 FAVORABLE.pdf

Uploaded by: Claudia Wilson Randall

Position: FAV



Testimony
SENATE BILL 370
Budget & Tax Committee
January 31, 2024
Position: FAVORABLE

Dear Chair Guzzone and Members of the Budget and Tax Committee:

The Community Development Network of Maryland (CDN) is the voice for Maryland’s community development sector and serves nearly 200 member organizations. CDN—focuses on small affordable housing developers, housing counseling agencies and community-based non-profits across the state of Maryland. The mission of CDN is to promote, strengthen and advocate for the community development sector throughout Maryland’s urban, suburban and rural communities. CDN envisions a state in which all communities are thriving and where people of all incomes have abundant opportunities for themselves and their families.

SB 370 - Establishes the Rental Assistance for Community School Families Program to provide rental assistance to eligible student households; requiring the State Department of Education, in consultation with the Department of Housing and Community Development, to administer the Program requiring the Governor to include in the annual budget bill an appropriation of \$10,000,000 for the Fund; etc.

According to the Maryland Housing Needs Assessment completed in 2021 by the National Center for Smart Growth and Enterprise Community Partners, Maryland is short 85,000 rental units for low-income households. The Blueprint for Maryland’s Future: Report on Neighborhood Indicators of Poverty analyzes the impact of poverty and socioeconomic status on student achievement, educational attainment, and other educational outcomes. According to the report, “Concentrated poverty and neighborhoods have a demonstrated and significant impact on a student’s educational career.”

Housing is an urgent priority for student achievement and learning loss from the pandemic. The revolving door of students in low-income communities due to housing instability make successful schools impossible. Community schools have been an excellent intervention and rental assistance can stabilize both the family and the school. Establishing a Fund that could provide cash assistance and support services to families experiencing financial crises that hinder their ability to pay their rent and stay housed. Too often, short term shocks have long term consequences which could be avoided if timely assistance was easily accessible. Safe, affordable, quality housing provides a foundation from which children can engage fully in schooling and set themselves up for success in the future.

We ask your favorable report for SB 370.

Submitted by Claudia Wilson Randall, Executive Director

SB 370 - DRM Written Testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: Cooper Gerus

Position: FAV



Empowerment. Integration. Equality.

1500 Union Ave., Suite 2000, Baltimore, MD 21211

Phone: 410-727-6352 | Fax: 410-727-6389

www.DisabilityRightsMD.org

Disability Rights Maryland

January 30, 2024

SB 370 – Community Schools - Rental Assistance for Community School Families Program and Fund - Establishment

Hearing of the Budget and Taxation Committee, January 31, 2024

Position: Favorable

Disability Rights Maryland (DRM – formerly Maryland Disability Law Center) is the federally designated Protection and Advocacy agency in Maryland, mandated to advance the civil rights of people with disabilities. DRM works to increase opportunities for Marylanders with disabilities to be part of their communities and live in safe, affordable and accessible housing.

DRM urges you to **support** SB 370, which will create an eviction prevention funds program for families with children enrolled in Maryland’s community schools. Eviction prevention funds are critical to further DRM’s work ensuring housing stability and community inclusion for families with disabilities in Maryland.

The National Low Income Housing Coalition (NLIHC) reports that families with disabilities represent 17% of extremely low income (ELI) renter households in Maryland.^a Of all ELI households in Maryland, 75% are “extremely cost burdened,” meaning that those families routinely spend more than 50% of their monthly income on housing and utility costs.^b These disparities put families, especially those with individuals with disabilities at risk of eviction and homelessness. SB 370 works to address these shortfalls by providing much needed eviction prevention funds.

The Blueprint for Maryland’s Future is investing significant funds to assist families whose children are attending community schools. Located throughout Maryland, Community Schools provide support for families by coordinating wraparound services like transportation, healthcare, counseling, and healthy food. **Without an investment in eviction prevention funds, students in community schools who are evicted will lose ready access to the support of their community school.**

Recent research is clear that preventing evictions stabilizes the family, the school, and the community. Students facing eviction are 6 times more likely to be chronically absent and 4 times more likely to not complete high school,¹ and students who have experienced housing insecurity were more likely to have a lower GPA as well as poorer mental health outcomes.² The National Center on Family Homelessness estimates that the graduation rate of children experiencing homelessness is less than 25%.³ **Families cannot thrive without safe, stable housing. Schools cannot thrive with a student body forced to live in unstable and deplorable conditions.**

According to a recent research report by Stout Risius Ross on eviction prevention funds in Maryland, a fully funded program would more than pay for itself. Every dollar spent on eviction prevention saves the State \$2.39. A full \$40 million investment in eviction prevention would yield approximately \$92 million in cost savings or avoidance for the State by reducing homelessness and state-funded safety net costs related to shelter, assisting students experiencing homelessness, health care, foster care, decreased

^a National Low Income Housing Coalition (NLIHC), Housing Needs by State: Maryland (2021), *available at*: <https://nlihc.org/housing-needs-by-state/maryland>.

^b *Id.*

incarceration, and the economic impacts of increased employment and income stability. **On education alone, Stout estimated that a fully funded eviction prevention funds program (about \$40 million) would provide \$23.75 million in benefits to the State through better education outcomes for students and an increase in federal funds.**

Eviction prevention through rental assistance furthers gender and racial equity. Women-led (70%) and Black-led (74%) households have avoided eviction with help from the state's current emergency rental assistance program and likely will be evicted at much higher rates unless the Governor and General Assembly take action.

We understand that the bill sponsor, Sen. Hettleman, will work with advocates, the Maryland State Dept. of Education, and the Dept. of Housing and Community Development to refine the administrative structure of the program and minimize the burden on community school coordinators. We also understand and support changing the current prioritization in the bill to better address the needs of families who are homeless or most at risk of homelessness.

Maryland cannot be a national leader in leaving no one behind, ending childhood poverty, righting the racial wrongs of the past, and ensuring shelter for all without investing in eviction prevention funds.

DRM urges you to support SB 370. For more information, please contact:

Cooper Alec Gerus (he/him)
Staff Attorney
Disability Rights Maryland
1500 Union Avenue, Ste. 2000
Baltimore, MD 21211
(202)-709-8513
CooperG@DisabilityRightsMD.org

¹ Stanford University's John W. Gardner Center for Youth and their Communities, Housing Instability and Educational Outcomes of San Mateo County Youth (2022), *available at*:

<https://gardnercenter.stanford.edu/publications/study-homeless-and-highly-mobile-students-san-mateo-county/housing-instability-and>

² Mariah Kornbluh, Jennfier Wilking, Susan Roll & Robin Donatello (2022): Exploring housing insecurity in relation to student success, Journal of American College Health, DOI: 10.1080/07448481.2022.2068016, *available at*: <https://housingresearchgroup.sites.csuchico.edu/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/Exploring-housing-insecurity-in-relation-to-student-success.pdf>

³ Health Care for the Homeless, Homelessness in Maryland (2023), *available at*: <https://www.hchmd.org/homelessness-maryland>.

YAB SB 370.pdf

Uploaded by: Damel Ross

Position: FAV

The Baltimore City Youth Action Board

SB 370 – Community Schools - Rental Assistance for Community School Families Program and Fund - Establishment

Hearing of the Budget and Taxation Committee, January 31, 2024

Position: Favorable

The Baltimore City Youth Action Board (“YAB”) urges you to support SB 370, which will create an eviction prevention funds program for families with children enrolled in Maryland’s community schools.

The Baltimore City YAB is in full support of bill **SB370**. We believe this bill will give youth the opportunity to achieve academic success without the burden of housing instability. We understand that youth burdened with housing instability tend to focus on survival rather than receiving education when faced with these challenges. **SB370** creates a preventative option to keeping minors off the streets. Homeless youth who do not receive the support needed, typically are placed in dangerous and compromising situations that can possibly alter the course of their future. This can lead to criminalization of homelessness, long-term homelessness, and trauma. Housing instability significantly affects the educational experiences of youth, posing challenges hindering their schooling and overall academic success and we hope to address this through **SB370**.

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<https://gardnercenter.stanford.edu/publications/study-homeless-and-highly-mobile-students-san-mateo-county/housing-instability-and>

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³ Health Care for the Homeless, Homelessness in Maryland, <https://www.hchmd.org/homelessness-maryland>(last visited Dec. 1, 2023).

incarceration, and the economic impacts of increased employment and income stability. **On education alone, Stout estimated that a fully funded eviction prevention funds program (about \$40 million) would provide \$23.75 million in benefits to the State through better education outcomes for students and an increase in federal funds.**

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Maryland cannot be a national leader in leaving no one behind, ending childhood poverty, righting the racial wrongs of the past, and ensuring shelter for all without investing in eviction prevention funds.

The Baltimore City YAB urges you to move favorable on SB 370. For more information contact: bmoreyab@gmail.com

Comments on SB370, Rental Assistance for Community

Uploaded by: Dan Reed

Position: FAV



Senator Guy Guzzone
and Members, Budget and Taxation Committee
Miller Senate Office Building
11 Bladen Street
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

January 31, 2024

Dear Senator Guzzone and Members of the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee:

My name is Dan Reed and I serve as the Regional Policy Director for [Greater Greater Washington](#), a nonprofit that works to advance racial, economic, and environmental justice in land use, transportation, and housing throughout Greater Washington. **GGWash supports Senate Bill 370**, which would create a fund to distribute rental assistance through the public school system.

Moving can be a big disruption for a kid, especially if you have to change schools: losing your friends, starting over with new teachers, and maybe having a longer or more difficult commute¹. It's worse when a family has to move because they can't afford rent. High "mobility rates" in a school—students churning in and out, often because of unstable housing—are shown to hurt academic performance², including for the kids who remain there³.

Senate Bill 370 would create a \$10 million fund for schools to provide up to 15 months' rental assistance for students in families experiencing financial hardship. This legislation recognizes the intersection between stable housing and better learning outcomes, and we ask the Budget and Taxation Committee to give this bill a favorable report.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Dan Reed'.

Dan Reed
Regional Policy Director

¹ <https://www.northernpublicradio.org/wnij-news/2022-11-28/how-high-student-mobility-rates-hurt-the-whole-school-community>

²

[https://dme.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/dme/publication/attachments/EC%20Mobility%20Research%20Memo%20-%20Meeting%205%20\(June%202016\).pdf](https://dme.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/dme/publication/attachments/EC%20Mobility%20Research%20Memo%20-%20Meeting%205%20(June%202016).pdf)

³ <https://www.edweek.org/leadership/student-mobility-how-it-affects-learning/2016/08>

The Washington, DC region is great and it can be greater.

DeeDee Rental Assistance Testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: Deedee Jacobsohn

Position: FAV

January 31, 2024

Deedee Jacobsohn
North Bethesda, Maryland



Testimony on SB0370 - Position: Favorable
**Community Schools - Rental Assistance for Community School Families Program
and Fund - Establishment**

My name is Deedee Jacobsohn and I am a resident of District 16 in Montgomery County. On behalf of Jews United for Justice (JUFJ), I am submitting this testimony **in support of SB 0370: Community Schools - Rental Assistance for Community School Families Program and Fund - Establishment**. JUFJ organizes 6,000 Jewish Marylanders and allies from across the state in support of social, racial, and economic justice campaigns. Keeping Marylanders safely and securely housed has been a focus of our efforts for more than eight years.

Jewish tradition teaches us that housing is a right, and that we all must look out for each other and our communities, that *tzedakah* (justice) is an obligation to provide for the physical needs of community members. But this obligation does not rest solely upon us as individuals to help another individual. Instead, the *Mishnah* (the foundational work of rabbinic literature) states that the obligations to help community members in need can and should be discharged by the collective. In other words, people give resources to the government (through taxes) and the state distributes them to those in need. Preventing evictions through additional financial assistance fulfills our obligation to keep people housed and ensures that landlords receive the rent money they are due.

Along with other JUFJers, I have observed rent court in Rockville, where hundreds of cases are tried each week. Beyond the fact that there is not enough funding for every tenant to receive assistance, tenants who do not understand the system have trouble getting connected to resources they could benefit from.

I met a woman who, when faced with the threat of eviction from her apartment complex, had to move further away from her job, and was forced to take her kids out of their school. She ended up moving into a smaller, cheaper apartment with unhealthy living conditions. This move disrupted her support networks, her easy access to her job, and her children's schooling.

Children are some of the most heavily impacted by these abrupt moves. I began working as a pre-K paraeducator three months ago in Montgomery County Public Schools, and I have already seen how quickly children regress when their time at school is interrupted because of challenging home situations. Removing children from their friend groups, familiar teachers, and established routines—especially when the disruption is caused by a trauma like possible eviction—is devastating. Moreover, I work at a

Community School where students and their families receive wraparound services including access to healthcare, counseling, healthy food, parental support, academic support, and extracurricular activities. Adding access to eviction prevention funds would ensure that parents have a familiar Liaison they can turn to for support, who will connect them to resources which will keep them housed and allow them to maintain access to the support their community and their Community School provide.

Maryland needs to invest in eviction prevention funds if it hopes to be a national leader in ending childhood poverty, education, ensuring safe housing for all, and leaving no one behind.

On behalf of Jews United for Justice, **I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on SB0370.**

Community School- Rental Assistance for Community

Uploaded by: Donald Eaddy

Position: FAV



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

THE Y IN CENTRAL MARYLAND
ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY • BALTIMORE CITY • BALTIMORE COUNTY • CARROLL COUNTY • HARFORD COUNTY • HOWARD COUNTY

Senate Bill 0370

Community School- Rental Assistance for Community School Families Program and Fund Establishment

Budget and Taxation Committee

Testimony from the Y in Central Maryland

The Y in Central Maryland is pleased to submit this written testimony in favor of Senator Shelly Hettleman's Senate Bill 0370, which proposes the establishment of the Rental Assistance for Community School Families Program. This initiative aims to provide crucial rental assistance to eligible households to address housing insecurity among families in Maryland.

According to the 2020 report by the Maryland State Department of Education, 1.7% of the student population (15,548 students) experienced homelessness, highlighting the urgent need for action. For 20 plus years, the Y has implemented the New Horizon's II program, which provides college and career readiness support to students in Baltimore City, Baltimore County, and Howard County who are experiencing homelessness. The program now supports 135 students each year.

As the Lead Agency for 27 Baltimore City Public Schools and a provider of technical support for 54 Baltimore County Public Schools and 4 Howard County Public Schools, The Y is deeply committed to the well-being and success of our communities. We witness firsthand the challenges faced by families striving to secure stable housing, which directly influences their children's educational opportunities and outcomes. To address these adverse outcomes, the Y has leveraged more than \$10 million to support the 27 schools where it serves as the lead agency, along with almost 15,000 volunteer hours this school year.

A charitable, cause-driven organization working for community well-being.

The Y.™ For a better us.

The Community Schools Strategy, which aims to address the six domains of the social determinants of health, recognizes housing as one of these crucial domains. The proposed Rental Assistance for Community School Families Program establishes the Rental Assistance for Community School Families Fund and allocates \$10,000,000 annually. This program encompasses an innovative and strategic approach to tackling housing instability.

The Y firmly believes that stable housing is fundamental to the well-being and academic achievement of students. Families can prioritize their children's education and overall stability by easing the financial strain of rent and fostering a more equitable and supportive learning environment.

In conclusion, The Y in Central Maryland urges the esteemed members of the Maryland Senate to support Senate Bill 0370. By investing in the Rental Assistance for Community School Families Program, we affirm our commitment to empowering families and strengthening communities across our great state. We express our gratitude for considering our testimony and for your dedication to the welfare of all Marylanders.

SB 370 Eviction Prevention in Community Schools Te

Uploaded by: Gwen DuBois

Position: FAV



SB 370 – Community Schools - Rental Assistance for Community School Families Program and Fund - Establishment

Hearing of the Budget and Taxation Committee, January 31, 2024

Position: Favorable

Chesapeake Physicians for Social Responsibility (CPSR) urges you to support SB 370, which will create an eviction prevention funds program for families with children enrolled in Maryland’s community schools.

Chesapeake Physicians for Social Responsibility is the statewide affiliate of Physicians for Social Responsibility. With our 900 supporters, our mission is to address the greatest public health threats of all: nuclear war and climate change, but we are also committed locally to addressing environmental injustice and health disparities. Health disparities may arise from problems with lack of employment, lack of educational opportunities, unhealthy environments, but nothing is more central to causing health disparities than housing insecurity. Evictions represent the worst outcome of housing insecurity, which includes high housing costs in proportion to income, poor housing quality, unstable neighborhood, overcrowding, and homelessness.¹

At Chesapeake Physicians for Social Responsibility, we know that prevention is the best treatment and preventing children from experiencing evictions is good medicine. There was a recent review² of the best designed studies looking at the harms from eviction filings and evictions on children from birth to age 9 which concluded the following:

- 1) A recent eviction was associated with worse mother-reported child health status at age 5 years.
- 2) Evicted children had more hospitalizations and worse access to energy, health care, and childcare.
- 3) For a cohort of at risk 9-year-old children experiencing evictions in the preceding year, that experience was associated with cognitive losses compared to non-evicted children that were equivalent to the loss of one full year of schooling.

¹ <https://www.huduser.gov/portal/pdredge/pdr-edge-frm-asst-sec-111918.html>

² <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamanetworkopen/fullarticle/2803667>

4) Evictions of pregnant women are associated with bad birth outcomes including premature birth and low birth weight.

5) A study in Cleveland found that by age 2, when there was an eviction filing history, there was a drop in lead testing and increase in lead levels compared to other children and even worse where there was actually an eviction.

If eviction filing is prevented for school age children, siblings born into the family where evictions have been avoided may experience better birth outcomes which could translate into lifelong health advantages. Preventing evictions may promote lead testing and prevent lead poisoning and irreversible brain injury in younger siblings.

Housing is health. Young children exposed to overcrowding and/or multiple moves in one year, were more often reported by their caregivers to have poor health, impaired educational, social or emotional skills, and were measured to have low weight compared to other children.³

In older children and adolescents, a history of multiple moves has been associated with mental health problems substance abuse, increased behavior problems, poor school performance, and increased risk of teen pregnancy. These negative outcomes will likely handicap them in their adult lives.

The Blueprint for Maryland's Future is investing significant funds to assist families whose children are attending community schools. Located throughout Maryland, [Community Schools](#) provide support for families by coordinating wraparound services like transportation, healthcare, counseling, and healthy food. **Without an investment in eviction prevention funds, students in community schools who are evicted will lose ready access to the support of their community school.**

Recent research is clear that preventing evictions stabilizes the family, the school, and the community. Students facing eviction are 6 times more likely to be chronically absent and 4 times more likely to not complete high school,⁴ and students who have experienced housing insecurity were more likely to have a lower GPA as well as poorer mental health outcomes.⁵ The National Center on Family Homelessness estimates that the graduation rate of children experiencing homelessness is less than 25%.⁶ **Families cannot thrive without safe, stable housing. Schools cannot thrive with a student body forced to live in unstable and deplorable conditions.**

According to a recent research report by Stout Risius Ross on eviction prevention funds in Maryland, a fully funded program would more than pay for itself. Every dollar spent on eviction prevention saves the State \$2.39.⁷ A full \$40 million investment in eviction prevention would yield approximately \$92 million

³ <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3134514/>

⁴ <https://gardnercenter.stanford.edu/publications/study-homeless-and-highly-mobile-students-san-mateo-county/housing-instability-and>

⁵ Mariah Kornbluh, et al., Exploring Housing Insecurity in Relation to Student Success, J Am Coll Health, Apr. 2022. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/35471954/>

⁶ Health Care for the Homeless, Homelessness in Maryland, <https://www.hchmd.org/homelessness-maryland> - :~:text=The National Center on Family,14.6%25 are proficient in reading

⁷ <https://www.mdeconomy.org/eviction-prevention-funds/>

in cost savings or avoidance for the State by reducing homelessness and state-funded safety net costs related to shelter, assisting students experiencing homelessness, health care, foster care, decreased incarceration, and the economic impacts of increased employment and income stability. **On education alone, Stout estimated that a fully funded eviction prevention funds program (about \$40 million) would provide \$23.75 million in benefits to the State through better education outcomes for students and an increase in federal funds.**

Eviction prevention through rental assistance furthers gender and racial equity. Women-led (70%) and Black-led (74%) households have avoided eviction with help from the state's current emergency rental assistance program and likely will be evicted at much higher rates unless the Governor and General Assembly take action.

We understand that the bill sponsor, Sen. Hettleman, will work with advocates, the Maryland State Dept. of Education, and the Dept. of Housing and Community Development to refine the administrative structure of the program and minimize the burden on community school coordinators. We also understand and support changing the current prioritization in the bill to better address the needs of families who are homeless or most at risk of homelessness.

Maryland cannot be a national leader in leaving no one behind, ending childhood poverty, righting the racial wrongs of the past, and ensuring shelter for all without investing in eviction prevention funds.

Chesapeake Physicians for Social Responsibility **urges you to move favorable on SB 370. For more information contact:** Gwen L. DuBois MD, MPH President at gdubois@jhsph.edu

SB 370 - B&T -Supp - Community Schools - Rental As

Uploaded by: Henry Bogdan

Position: FAV



marylandnonprofits.org

1500 Union Avenue | Suite 2500 | Baltimore, MD 21211
410.727.6367 | 800.273.6367 | Fax 410.235.2190

January 31, 2024

Testimony on Senate Bill 370
Community Schools - Rental Assistance for Community School Families
Program and Fund - Establishment
Senate Budget and Taxation Committee

Position: Favorable

Maryland Nonprofits is a statewide association of almost 1800 nonprofit organizations and institutions. We urge you to support Senate Bill 370 to stabilize the housing situation of children and families in need of rental assistance through their Community Schools.

The Community Schools Program is a part of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future's recognition that many factors outside the classroom can negatively impact school performance, particularly for children whose families are living in or near poverty. This program is already investing significant funds to assist families by coordinating wraparound services like transportation, healthcare, counseling, and healthy food.

Recent research has found that students facing eviction are 6 times more likely to be chronically absent and 4 times more likely to not complete high school. Students who have experienced housing insecurity were more likely to have a lower Grade Point Averages as well as poorer mental health outcomes. The National Center on Family Homelessness estimates that the graduation rate of children experiencing homelessness is less than 25%. Families cannot thrive without safe, stable housing. Schools cannot thrive with a student body forced to live in unstable and deplorable conditions. Failure to address housing insecurity creates a significant threat to the success of our current and future investments in public education.

The Community Schools Program offers a vehicle in place, already established to coordinate services holistically, to identify and address needs for rental assistance. Creating the program and fund proposed by Senate Bill 370 will both strengthen the Blueprint and advance our efforts to overcome systemic racial, economic and gender inequities.

We urge you to give Senate Bill 370 a favorable report.



Maryland Nonprofits' mission is to strengthen organizations and networks for greater quality of life and equity.

SB 370_Homeless Persons Representation Project_FAV

Uploaded by: Ingrid Lofgren

Position: FAV



HOMELESS PERSONS REPRESENTATION PROJECT

SB 370 – Community Schools - Rental Assistance for Community School Families Program and Fund - Establishment

Hearing of the Budget and Taxation Committee, January 31, 2024

Position: FAVORABLE

Homeless Persons Representation Project (HPRP) urges the Committee to support SB 370, which will prevent evictions and homelessness for Maryland children and families by providing rental assistance to eligible student households at community schools.

HPRP is a non-profit civil legal aid organization that provides free legal services to Marylanders who are homeless or at risk of homelessness on issues that create barriers to housing and economic stability. HPRP provides direct services through offices serving Baltimore City, Montgomery County, and Prince George's County, and advocates for policies that will prevent and end homelessness statewide. HPRP's Homeless Youth Initiative (HYI) serves youth and young adults under age 25. Most of HPRP's client households include school-age children or older youth who have been students in community schools.

SB 370 promotes housing and educational stability for families, and will further gender and racial equity, by addressing an urgent unmet need for rental assistance. Most of the households that HPRP represents in eviction proceedings are headed by single mothers with school-age children. This is not surprising given that single-parent renter households had the highest cost-burden rate nationally in 2022 at 62% percent.¹ In addition, most households, especially those with children, do not have sufficient residual income to pay rent arrears.² During the COVID-19 pandemic, increased government investment in rental assistance provided an essential lifeline for HPRP's clients when legal assistance alone could not prevent eviction. With help from the state's emergency rental assistance program, women-led (70%) and Black-led (74%) households avoided eviction. This equitable and effective two-generation approach to supporting families stabilized the family's housing, enabling parents to pursue or sustain employment, and eliminated barriers to educational stability for children. Students facing eviction are 6 times more likely to be chronically absent and 4 times more likely to not complete high school,³ and students who have experienced housing insecurity were more likely to have a lower GPA as well as poorer mental health outcomes.⁴ The National Center on Family Homelessness estimates that the graduation rate of children experiencing homelessness is less than 25%.⁵ Unfortunately, almost all of this COVID rental assistance funding has been exhausted and the funding will no longer be available when SB 370 takes effect.

In addition, rental assistance is a sound investment that avoids the human and fiscal costs of eviction and homelessness. The Blueprint for Maryland's Future is investing significant funds to assist families whose children are attending community schools. Located throughout Maryland, community schools provide support for families by coordinating wraparound services like transportation, healthcare, counseling, and healthy food. Without an investment in rental assistance funds, students in community schools who are evicted will lose access to the support of their community school. Recent research is clear

that preventing evictions stabilizes the family, the school, and the community. [According to a recent research report by Stout Risius Ross on eviction prevention funds in Maryland, a fully funded program would more than pay for itself. Every dollar spent on eviction prevention saves the State \\$2.39.](#) A full \$40 million investment in eviction prevention would yield approximately \$92 million in cost savings or avoidance for the State by reducing homelessness and state-funded safety net costs related to shelter, assisting students experiencing homelessness, health care, foster care, decreased incarceration, and the economic impacts of increased employment and income stability. On education alone, Stout estimated that a fully funded eviction prevention funds program (about \$40 million) would provide \$23.75 million in benefits to the State through better education outcomes for students and an increase in federal funds. The SB 370 Fiscal and Policy Note indicates that the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development (DCHD) estimates that the full \$10 million in rental assistance funding included in the bill will likely to serve 3,000 to 3,500 families per year. With many families likely including multiple children, the benefits and cost savings associated with this investment are significant.

Effective and equitable administration of rental assistance programs is critical to their positive impact. We understand that the bill sponsor, Sen. Hettleman, will work with advocates, the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), and the Department of Housing and Community Development to refine the administrative structure of the program and minimize the burden on community school staff. As the SB 370 Fiscal and Policy Note recognizes, MSDE and community school coordinators at each school currently lack the capacity to effectively implement the proposed program. HPRP supports the anticipated investment in staffing. We also strongly support changing the current prioritization of rental assistance funding in the bill to better address the needs of families who are homeless or most at risk of homelessness, and to ensure equitable implementation of the program.

In sum, families cannot thrive without safe, stable housing. Schools cannot thrive with a student body forced to live in unstable and deplorable conditions. Maryland cannot be a national leader in leaving no one behind, ending childhood poverty, advancing gender and racial equity, and ensuring shelter for all without investing in eviction prevention funds.

HPRP urges you to move favorable on SB 370. For more information, please contact Ingrid Lofgren, Director of HPRP's Homeless Youth Initiative, at ilofgren@hprplaw.org or (410)656-9975.

¹ America's Rental Housing, https://www.jchs.harvard.edu/sites/default/files/reports/files/Harvard_JCHS_Americas_Rental_Housing_2024.pdf (last visited January 30, 2024)

² *Id.*, stating that renter households earning less than \$30,000 annually had an all-time low median residual income of just \$310 per month and among those renters it was found that those with high cost burdens fared even worse with a median residual income of just \$170.

³ <https://gardnercenter.stanford.edu/publications/study-homeless-and-highly-mobile-students-san-mateo-county/housing-instability-and>

⁴ Mariah Kornbluh, et al., Exploring Housing Insecurity in Relation to Student Success, *J Am Coll Health*, Apr. 2022.

⁵ Health Care for the Homeless, Homelessness in Maryland, <https://www.hchmd.org/homelessness-maryland> (last visited Dec. 1, 2023).

BaltimoreCounty_FAV_SB0370.pdf

Uploaded by: Jennifer Lynch

Position: FAV



JOHN A. OLSZEWSKI, JR.
County Executive

JENNIFER AIOSA
Director of Government Affairs

AMANDA KONTZ CARR
Legislative Officer

WILLIAM J. THORNE
Legislative Associate

BILL NO.: **SB 370**

TITLE: Community Schools – Rental Assistance for Community School Families Program and Fund – Establishment

SPONSOR: Senator Hettleman

COMMITTEE: Budget and Taxation

POSITION: **Support**

DATE: January 31, 2024

Baltimore County **SUPPORTS** Senate Bill 370 – Community Schools – Rental Assistance for Community School Families Program and Fund – Establishment. This legislation establishes the Rental Assistance for Community School Families Program to help families who are at risk for homelessness or eviction, and who attend a community school. SB 270 gives the Maryland State Department of Education the responsibility for administering the \$10,000,000 in funds.

This program targets housing assistance to provide for families and individuals who are most in-need. Community schools are intended to address structural and institutional barriers in the historically underfunded communities they serve, largely by providing wraparound services. Community schools are designated by the Maryland State Blueprint for Maryland’s Future’s Concentration of Poverty (COP) Grant. This initiative leverages assets within neighborhoods to improve outcomes for students experiencing poverty. The Rental Assistance for Community School Families Program is consistent with this mission; it allows Community Schools to leverage an additional resource for both alleviating childhood poverty and commits significant resources to housing stability efforts.

Accordingly, Baltimore County requests a **FAVORABLE** report on SB 370 from the Senate Budget and Taxation committee. For more information, please contact Jenn Aiosa, Director of Government Affairs at jaiosa@baltimorecountymd.gov.

SB 370 Testimony - Community Legal Services (2024-

Uploaded by: John Kowalko

Position: FAV



January 30, 2024

The Honorable Senator Guy Guzzone
Chair, Budget and Taxation Committee
3 West, Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

**SB 370 - Community Schools - Rental Assistance for Community School Families Program
and Fund - Establishment
Hearing before the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee
January 31, 2024**

Position: FAVORABLE

Dear Chair Guzzone and Committee Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of Senate Bill 370, which would create an eviction prevention program for families with children enrolled in Maryland's Community Schools.

Community Legal Services of Prince George's County ("CLS") is a private, non-profit organization that provides free legal services to low-income Maryland residents. Since 1985, we have provided civil legal assistance in Prince George's County, and we extended our services to assist Anne Arundel County residents in landlord-tenant matters as the need for legal representation increased during the pandemic. Each year, CLS assists thousands of tenants who are facing possible eviction.

Eviction prevention funding programs are a crucial mechanism to maintain stability for families, schools, and communities. Students facing eviction are six times more likely to be chronically absent and four times more likely to not complete high school.ⁱ Students who have experienced housing insecurity were more likely to have a lower GPA as well as poorer mental health outcomes.ⁱⁱ The National Center on Family Homelessness estimates that the graduation rate of children experiencing homelessness is less than 25%.ⁱⁱⁱ

The Blueprint for Maryland's Future is investing significant funds to assist families whose children are attending Community Schools. These schools provide coordination of wraparound services including transportation, healthcare, counseling, and healthy food. When students are evicted from their homes, they lose the support provided to them by their Community School.

SB 370_MD Center on Economic Policy_FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Kali Schumitz

Position: FAV

Marylanders Needs Eviction Prevention Funding

Position Statement Supporting Senate Bill 370

Given before the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee

SB 370 will create an eviction prevention funds program for families with children in Maryland's community schools. The Blueprint for Maryland's Future is investing significant funds to assist families whose children are attending community schools, but without an investment in eviction prevention funds, students in community schools who are evicted will face additional challenges and lose access to the supports they receive from their community school. For these reasons, the **Maryland Center on Economic Policy supports Senate Bill 370**

Located throughout Maryland, [community schools](#) provide support for families by coordinating wraparound services like transportation, healthcare, counseling, and healthy food. Recent research is clear that preventing evictions stabilizes the family, the school, and the community. Elementary school students facing eviction are six times more likely to be chronically absent while middle and high school students were five times more likely to be absent and four times less likely to complete high school.ⁱ Students who have experienced housing insecurity were more likely to have a lower GPA as well as poorer mental health outcomes.ⁱⁱ The National Center on Family Homelessness estimates that the graduation rate of children experiencing homelessness is less than 25%.ⁱⁱⁱ Families cannot thrive without safe and stable housing. Schools cannot thrive with a student body forced to live in unstable and deplorable conditions.

According to a recent study by Stout Risius Ross on eviction prevention funds in Maryland, a fully funded program would more than pay for itself.^{iv} Every dollar spent on eviction prevention saves the state \$2.39. A full \$40 million investment in eviction prevention would yield approximately \$92 million in cost savings or avoidance for the state by reducing homelessness and state-funded safety net costs related to shelter, assisting students experiencing homelessness, health care, foster care, decreased incarceration, and the economic impacts of increased employment and income stability. On education alone, Stout estimated that a fully funded eviction prevention funds program (about \$40 million) would provide \$23.75 million in benefits to the state through better education outcomes for students and an increase in federal funds.

Maryland has long had an affordable housing problem. According to the Maryland Housing Needs Assessment, nearly one-third of all Maryland households are experiencing housing cost burdens.^v Of these, 67% are homeowners while 33% are renters. Among renters, 48% of those households are cost burdened, and among low-income households, 76% are severely cost-burdened.

The latest Out of Reach report from the National Low Income Housing Coalition lists Maryland as the tenth least affordable state for renters.^{vi} To afford a modest two-bedroom apartment in the state, a family must earn \$31.08 an hour or \$64,642 annually. A minimum wage worker in Maryland would have to work 79 hours per week year-round. When families struggle to pay rent, they face greater risks of instability, eviction, and even homelessness,

which research links to food insecurity, poor health, lower cognitive scores and academic achievement, and more frequent foster care placement among children.

Unaffordable and unstable housing perpetuates racial, economic and health disparities in our state. If we want to close disparities between white and Black and Brown Marylanders, we must begin with housing. Eviction prevention through rental assistance furthers gender and racial equity. Women-led (70%) and Black-led (74%) households have avoided eviction over the last two years with help from the state's emergency rental assistance program and likely will be evicted at much higher rates unless the Governor and General Assembly take action to continue funding the program.

We understand that the bill sponsor will work with stakeholders and state agencies to refine the administrative structure of the program and minimize the burden on community school coordinators and are supportive of any amendments needed to achieve that. We also understand and support changing the current prioritization in the bill to better address the needs of families who are homeless or most at risk of homelessness.

Maryland cannot be a national leader in leaving no one behind, ending childhood poverty, righting the racial wrongs of the past, and ensuring shelter for all without investing in eviction prevention funds. For these reasons, **the Maryland Center on Economic Policy respectfully requests the Budget and Taxation Committee to make a favorable report on Senate Bill 370.**

Equity Impact Analysis: Senate Bill 370

Bill Summary

SB 370 will create an eviction prevention funds program for families with children in Maryland's community schools. The Blueprint for Maryland's Future is investing significant funds to assist families whose children are attending community schools. Located throughout Maryland, [Community Schools](#) provide support for families by coordinating wraparound services like transportation, healthcare, counseling, and healthy food.

Background

Maryland has long had an affordable housing problem. According to the Maryland Housing Needs Assessment, nearly one-third of all Maryland households are experiencing housing cost burdens.^{vii} Of these, 67% are homeowners while 33% are renters. Among renters, 48% of those households are cost burdened, and among low-income households, 76% are severely cost-burdened.

The latest Out of Reach report from the National Low Income Housing Coalition lists Maryland as the ninth least affordable state for renters. To afford a modest two-bedroom apartment in the state, a family must earn \$31.08 an hour or \$64,642 annually. A minimum wage worker in Maryland would have to work 79 hours per week year-round.

Recent research is clear that preventing evictions stabilizes the family, the school, and the community. Elementary school students facing eviction are 6 times more likely to be chronically absent while Middle and High school student were 5 times more likely to be absent and 4 times more less likely to not complete high school. Students who have experienced housing insecurity were more likely to have a lower GPA as well as poorer mental health outcomes. The National Center on Family Homelessness estimates that the graduation rate of children experiencing homelessness is less than 25%. Families cannot thrive without safe, stable housing. Schools cannot thrive with a student body forced to live in unstable and deplorable conditions.

Equity Implications

When families struggle to pay rent, they face greater risks of instability, eviction, and even homelessness, which research links to food insecurity, poor health, lower cognitive scores and academic achievement, and more frequent foster care placement among children.

Unaffordable and unstable housing perpetuates racial, economic and health disparities in our state. If we want to close disparities between white, black and brown Marylanders, we must begin with housing. Eviction prevention through rental assistance furthers gender and racial equity. Women-led (70%) and Black-led (74%) households have avoided eviction with help from the state's current emergency rental assistance program and likely will be evicted at much higher rates unless the Governor and General Assembly take action.

Impact

SB 370 will likely **improve racial, health and economic equity** in Maryland.

ⁱ John W. Gardner Center, <https://gardnercenter.stanford.edu/publications/study-homeless-and-highly-mobile-students-san-mateo-county/housing-instability-and>

ⁱⁱ Mariah Kornbluh, et al., Exploring Housing Insecurity in Relation to Student Success, J Am Coll Health, Apr. 2022. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/35471954/>

ⁱⁱⁱ Health Care for the Homeless, Homelessness in Maryland, <https://www.hchmd.org/homelessness-maryland> (last visited Dec. 1, 2023).

^{iv} Maryland Center on Economic Policy <https://www.mdeconomy.org/eviction-prevention-funds/>

^v Maryland 10 Year Housing Assessment <https://dhcd.maryland.gov/Documents/Other%20Publications/Report.pdf>

^{vi} National Low Income Housing Coalition <https://nlihc.org/oor/state/md>

^{vii} Maryland 10 Year Housing Assessment <https://dhcd.maryland.gov/Documents/Other%20Publications/Report.pdf>

NASW Maryland - 2024 SB 370 FAV - Community School

Uploaded by: Karessa Proctor

Position: FAV

Testimony before the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee

Senate Bill 370: Community Schools - Rental Assistance for Community School Families Program and Fund - Establishment January 31, 2024 ****Support****

Senator Guzzone, Senator Hettleman, and Members of the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee:

On behalf of the Social Work in Schools Committee of the National Association of Social Workers, Maryland Chapter, we would like to express our support for Senate Bill 370: Community Schools - Rental Assistance for Community School Families Program and Fund – Establishment.

NASW is the largest national organization of the profession, representing over 120,000 social workers nationwide, with 17,000 licensed in the state of Maryland. Our committee includes school social workers serving in school systems throughout Maryland.

The Community Schools [website](#) of the Blueprint for Maryland’s Future states, “Community schools serve as hubs that bring families, communities, and partners together to remove barriers to learning.” Providing site-based resources determined by an individualized Needs Assessment, families can access services that address and support physical, dental, and mental health; food scarcity; tutoring needs; mentoring and more.

Homelessness has long been recognized as one of the most disruptive events impacting children’s long-term educational success. In a [presentation](#) to the State Board of Education in 2021, then-Superintendent Mohammed Choudhury detailed its persistence, range, and impact on Maryland’s students as compared to their continuously-housed peers. The data he presented showed gaps of 23%-25% in English Language Arts and Math proficiency, a 31% increase in chronic absenteeism, a 17% lower graduation rate, and a 20% higher drop-out rate for students who have experience disrupted housing. Homelessness is enumerated as one of the major Adverse Childhood Events (ACE).

Adding rental and utility support as a resource to the many others that Community School families can access is an important first step in supporting our students and narrowing these gaps and reaching our goal of providing a world-class education for all Maryland students.

We ask that you return a favorable report for SB 370.

Respectfully,

Gail L. Martin, LCSW-C; Legislative Committee Liaison, Social Work in Schools Committee
NASW-MD

SB370 - (HB 428) Eviction prevention funds - SENAT

Uploaded by: Katherine Davis

Position: FAV



SB 370

Community Schools – Rental Assistance for Community School Families Program and Fund - Establishment HEARING BEFORE THE BUDGET AND TAXATION COMMITTEE January 31, 2024 at 1:00 PM POSITION: FAVORABLE

The Pro Bono Resource Center of Maryland (“PBRC”), an independent 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, is the statewide thought leader and clearinghouse for pro bono civil legal services in Maryland. As the designated pro bono arm of the MSBA, PBRC provides training, mentorship, and pro bono service opportunities to members of the private bar and offers direct legal services to over 6,200 clients annually. **PBRC supports SB 370 because it represents a common sense way to ensure that tenants and their children will have access to rental assistance funds when they most need it in order to preserve stable housing for their entire families.**

In May 2017, with a grant from the Maryland Judiciary’s Access to Justice Department, in 2017 **PBRC launched the Tenant Volunteer Lawyer of the Day (“TVLD”) Program in Baltimore City Rent Court to provide day-of-court legal representation to tenants who appear unrepresented for their proceedings.** Since then, this continually-expanding Program has allowed PBRC staff and volunteer attorneys to represent thousands of tenants in both Baltimore City and Baltimore County in multiple types of legal actions that could result in eviction. PBRC staff has also gone on to assist tenants as they struggle to find or maintain stable housing. We are intimately aware of the thin line that often separates housed families from those experiencing homelessness. Often our clients face eviction not because they have repeatedly missed rent payments, but because they have encountered just one or two financial roadblocks – an illness, necessary car repairs, reduced works hours or a temporary lapse in employment – that result in just one or two months of unpaid rent. This temporary lapse in payment can lead to never-ending late fees and court costs and, ultimately, a warrant for eviction. Emergency Rental Assistance is a vital piece of Maryland’s housing strategy and must be accessible in order to stop this cycle and ensure stable housing for these families.

Connecting these vital supports to schools represents a common sense approach to their delivery. **PBRC urges you to support SB 370, which will create an eviction prevention funds program for families with children enrolled in Maryland’s community schools. During 2023 over 47% of PBRC’s housing clients reported having school-age children in the home.** We know that, while evictions have dire consequences on everyone involved, it is often the children who suffer the most. Students facing eviction are 6 times more likely to be chronically absent and 4 times more likely to not complete high school,ⁱ and students who have experienced housing insecurity were more likely to have a lower GPA as well as poorer mental health outcomes.ⁱⁱ The National Center on Family Homelessness estimates that the graduation rate of children experiencing homelessness is less than 25%.ⁱⁱⁱ **Families cannot thrive without safe, stable housing. Schools cannot thrive with a student body forced to live in unstable and deplorable conditions.**

Through the Blueprint for Maryland Future, Maryland is investing significant funds to assist families whose children attend community schools. Located throughout Maryland, Community Schools provide support for families by coordinating wraparound services like transportation, healthcare, counseling, and healthy food. **Adding housing stability supports such as eviction prevention funds will go a long way toward reducing student mobility, increasing school attendance, and stabilizing communities.**

[According to a recent research report by Stout Risius Ross on eviction prevention funds in Maryland, a fully funded program would more than pay for itself. Every dollar spent on eviction prevention saves the State \\$2.39.](#) A full \$40 million investment in eviction prevention would yield approximately \$92 million in cost savings or avoidance for the State by reducing homelessness and state-funded safety net costs related to shelter, assisting students experiencing homelessness, health care, foster care, decreased incarceration, and the economic impacts of increased employment and income stability. **On education alone, Stout estimated that a fully funded eviction prevention funds program (about \$40 million) would provide \$23.75 million in benefits to the State through better education outcomes for students and an increase in federal funds.**

PBRC understands that the bill sponsor, Sen. Hettleman, will work with advocates, the Maryland State Department of Education, and the Department of Housing and Community Development to refine the administrative structure of the program and minimize the burden on community school coordinators. We also understand and support changing the current prioritization in the bill to better address the needs of families who are homeless or most at risk of homelessness.

Maryland cannot be a national leader in ending childhood poverty, righting the racial wrongs of the past and ensuring shelter for all without investing in eviction prevention funds. SB 370 offers a common sense approach to this investment. For these reasons, PBRC supports SB 370. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

For the above reasons,

PBRC urges a FAVORABLE report on SB 370/HB 428.

Please contact Katherine Davis, Director of PBRC's Courtroom Advocacy Project, with any questions.
kdavis@probonomd.org • 443-703-3049

ⁱ <https://gardnercenter.stanford.edu/publications/study-homeless-and-highly-mobile-students-san-mateo-county/housing-instability-and>

ⁱⁱ Mariah Kornbluh, et al., Exploring Housing Insecurity in Relation to Student Success, J Am Coll Health, Apr. 2022.

ⁱⁱⁱ Health Care for the Homeless, Homelessness in Maryland, <https://www.hchmd.org/homelessness-maryland> (last visited Dec. 1, 2023).

Levy Johnson, CO-Chair of The Baltimore City Youth

Uploaded by: Levy Johnson

Position: FAV

Levy Johnson, Co-Chair of The Baltimore City Youth Action Board

SB 370 – Community Schools - Rental Assistance for Community School Families
Program and Fund - Establishment

Hearing of the Budget and Taxation Committee, January 31, 2024

Position: Favorable

I, Levy Johnson, Co-Chair of The Baltimore City Youth Action Board, urge you to support SB 370, which will create an eviction prevention funds program for families with children enrolled in Maryland’s community schools.

My experience of homelessness as a minor profoundly impacted my life’s trajectory, diverting me from being a thriving student and athlete to facing significant challenges. These struggles led to difficulties in maintaining focus on education and contributed to a shift towards employment as my primary concern before the age of 16. During my time in high school I was an honor roll student and I was an exceptional athlete in football, Basketball, and track & field . Due to my housing instability I needed to sustain myself and fast therefore I prioritized working a job because it was crucial for my survival.

With housing instability and homelessness came additional associated hardships, including depression, precarious situations and substance abuse, further complicated my journey. Despite enrolling into college and maintaining good intentions, the instability in housing & my mental health struggles clouded my judgment making me feel as though I needed to do whatever it takes to survive. This eventually led me to being incarcerated at the young age of 18 due to me being emotionally unbalanced directly correlated from unstable living situations and mental health. To this day my life is affected when it comes to getting a job, obtaining stable housing, resources and equitable opportunities.

SB 370 would have been able to positively impact me during my years as a minor by allowing me to focus on my education,not forcing me into adulthood at a young age. This bill would give youth the opportunity to overcome homelessness and get a fair chance at life. As the Co-Chair of The Baltimore City Youth Action Board I have spoken with youth who are feeling hopeless due to their housing instability.This Bill can majorly change the outcome of youth lives by acting as a preventative measure to combat homelessness, mental health, and criminalization of youth homelessness. This narrative underscores the profound impact of housing instability on one's life path and the struggles faced in trying to overcome these adversities.

For these reasons I urge that you support SB 370.

SB0370 ACDS Support - School Fund for Rental Assis

Uploaded by: Lisa Sarro

Position: FAV



SB0370 – Community Schools - Rental Assistance for Community School Families Program and Fund - Establishment

Hearing of the Budget and Taxation Committee, January 31, 2024

Position: Favorable

SUPPORT: SB0370 would help meet a critical need by ensuring that Community Schools staff have an efficient way to secure funds to: prevent evictions, provide rental assistance, and provide other resources to support students whose families are struggling with unsafe housing, the threat of homelessness, and homelessness.

ACDS serves as Anne Arundel County's nonprofit housing and community development agency, helping Anne Arundel County residents thrive through their ability to obtain and maintain safe, stable, and affordable housing. As part of fulfilling this role, ACDS administers an Eviction Prevention Program using federal, State and local funds. ACDS also administers grants to other nonprofits providing eviction prevention funding and works closely with the County's Continuum of Care, the Coalition to End Homelessness, and foundations and faith-based organizations that help households at risk of eviction.

We frequently work with Pupil Personnel Workers, McKinney-Vento Liaisons and others connected to our local schools to try to help school families struggling with housing instability and homelessness. We know the lengths to which these school employees go to try to pull together resources for families in crisis so they can find housing, keep housing, or replace unsafe housing with safe and stable housing. *They scramble tirelessly*, reaching out to multiple sources at once, navigating the complex eligibility and paperwork requirements of many different programs, not to mention trying to keep track of what organizations may have funding or may have exhausted their funding at any given time. The Rental Assistance Program contemplated by this bill would eliminate that scramble by keeping the rental assistance piece of the families' need for assistance "in-house."

While there will clearly be a new administrative component for MDSE, technical assistance is available through the Department of Housing and Community Development, and because of the need to create emergency rental assistance programs throughout the State in response to the Covid public health crisis, best practices are known and can be replicated to ensure the new program is efficient and successful.

As written, the bill targets Community Schools. To ensure aid reaches those families most in need, we would urge that any amendments to SB 370 emphasize collaboration between community school coordinators, Pupil Personnel Workers, and McKinney-Vento liaisons, who all play a pivotal role in supporting students facing or experiencing homelessness.

For the reasons noted above, ACDS urges the Committee to issue a FAVORABLE report on SB0370.

410-222-7600 Voice
410-222-7619 Fax

2666 Riva Road, Suite 210
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

info@acdsinc.org
www.acdsinc.org

SB0370_CC_Martinez_FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Madelin Martinez

Position: FAV



Senate Bill 370
Community Schools - Rental Assistance for Community School Families Program and Fund - Establishment

Budget and Taxation Committee
January 30, 2024

Support

Catholic Charities of Baltimore strongly supports SB 370, which will create an eviction prevention fund program for families with children enrolled in Maryland’s community schools.

For a century, Catholic Charities has provided care and services to improve the lives of Marylanders in need. We accompany Marylanders as they age with dignity, support their pursuit of employment and career advancement, heal from trauma and addiction, achieve economic independence, prepare for educational success, and welcome immigrant neighbors into Maryland communities.

As one of the largest human service providers in Maryland, we continually receive referrals for our Eviction Prevention Program. In Fiscal Year 2022, we received 793 referrals and successfully assisted 233 individuals. In Fiscal Year 2023, the number of referrals increased to 908, but the assistance provided decreased to 153 individuals. Currently, in the first half of Fiscal Year 2024, we have received an astounding 1656 referrals, yet regrettably, funding and program requirements limited our capacity to assist 75.

The significant surge in referrals, doubling from the previous fiscal year, highlights the growing demand for eviction prevention services. However, there is a concerning trend as the level funding provided has decreased by 87 percent compared to the previous fiscal year.

It is evident that additional financial assistance is crucial to support Marylanders in maintaining stable housing, especially those with limited incomes. Many individuals we work with struggle to cover basic household bills, and the scarcity of affordable housing options further compounds the challenges for those earning low wages. The effectiveness of the financial assistance is evident in the fact that for our most recent cohort of individuals and families, 82% remained stably housed 6 months post-award.

Recent research is clear that preventing evictions stabilizes the family, the school, and the community. Students facing eviction are 6 times more likely to be chronically absent and 4 times more likely to not complete high school,ⁱ and students who have experienced housing insecurity were more likely to have a lower GPA as well as poorer mental health outcomes.ⁱⁱ The National Center on Family Homelessness estimates that the graduation rate of children experiencing homelessness is less than 25%.ⁱⁱⁱ The overarching message is clear: families cannot thrive without safe, stable housing, and schools cannot thrive with a student body forced to endure unstable housing conditions.

On behalf of the individuals and families we work with, Catholic Charities of Baltimore appreciates your consideration, and urges the committee to issue a favorable report for SB 370.

Submitted By: Madelin Martinez, Assistant Director of Advocacy

ⁱ <https://gardnercenter.stanford.edu/publications/study-homeless-and-highly-mobile-students-san-mateo-county/housing-instability-and>

ⁱⁱ Mariah Kornbluh, et al., Exploring Housing Insecurity in Relation to Student Success, J Am Coll Health, Apr. 2022.

ⁱⁱⁱ Health Care for the Homeless, Homelessness in Maryland, <https://www.hchmd.org/homelessness-maryland> (last visited Dec. 1, 2023).

SB370_MAP_FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Mark Huffman

Position: FAV



TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 370

Community Schools-Rental Assistance for Community School Families Program and Fund – Establishment

Budget and Taxation Committee

January 31, 2024 1pm

Submitted by Kali Schumitz and Mark Huffman, Co-Chairs

Member Agencies:

211 Maryland

Anne Arundel County Food Bank

Baltimore Jewish Council

Behavioral Health System Baltimore

CASH Campaign of Maryland

Energy Advocates

Episcopal Diocese of Maryland

Family League of Baltimore

Fuel Fund of Maryland

Job Opportunities Task Force

Laurel Advocacy & Referral Services, Inc.

League of Women Voters of Maryland

Loyola University Maryland

Maryland Center on Economic Policy

Maryland Community Action Partnership

Maryland Family Network

Maryland Food Bank

Maryland Hunger Solutions

Paul's Place

St. Vincent de Paul of Baltimore

Welfare Advocates

Marylanders Against Poverty

Kali Schumitz, Co-Chair

P: 410-412- 9105 ext 701

E: kschumitz@mdeconomy.org

Mark Huffman, Co-Chair

P: (301) 776-0442 x1033

E: MHuffman@laureladvocacy.org

Marylanders Against Poverty (MAP) strongly supports SB 370 which will create an eviction prevention funds program for families with children enrolled in Maryland's community schools.

Service providers in our coalition with direct experience in eviction prevention programming report increased numbers of unhoused clients seeking help, three times as many requests for assistance as can be addressed, and a reduction of over 50% of available funds resulting from the exhaustion of American Rescue Plan Act funding.

Rising rental costs, escalating utility bills, and soaring prices of essentials push more and more families to the edge of eviction.

The Blueprint for Maryland's Future is investing significant funds to assist families whose children are attending community schools. Located throughout Maryland, [Community Schools](#) provide support for families by coordinating wraparound services like transportation, healthcare, counseling, and healthy food. **Without an investment in eviction prevention funds, students in community schools who are evicted will lose ready access to the support of their community school.**

Recent research is clear that preventing evictions stabilizes the family, the school, and the community. Students facing eviction are 6 times more likely to be chronically absent and 4 times more likely to not complete high school,¹ and students who have experienced housing insecurity were more likely to have a lower GPA as well as poorer mental health outcomes.² The National Center on Family Homelessness estimates that the graduation rate of children experiencing homelessness is less than 25%.³ **Families cannot thrive without safe, stable housing. Schools cannot thrive with a student body forced to live in unstable and deplorable conditions.**

[According to a recent research report by Stout Risius Ross on eviction prevention funds in Maryland, a fully funded program would more than pay for itself. Every dollar spent on eviction prevention saves the State \\$2.39.](#) A full \$40 million investment in eviction prevention would yield approximately \$92 million in cost savings or avoidance for the State by reducing homelessness and state-funded safety net costs related to shelter, assisting students experiencing homelessness, health care, foster care, decreased incarceration, and the economic impacts of increased employment and income stability. **On education alone, Stout estimated that a fully funded eviction prevention funds program (about \$40 million) would provide \$23.75 million in benefits to the State through better education outcomes for students and an increase in federal funds.**

Eviction prevention through rental assistance furthers gender and racial equity. Women-led (70%) and Black-led (74%) households have avoided eviction with help from the state's current emergency rental assistance program and likely will be evicted at much higher rates unless the Governor and General Assembly take action.

We understand that the bill sponsor, Sen. Hettleman, will work with advocates, the Maryland State Dept. of Education, and the Dept. of Housing and Community Development to refine the administrative structure of the program and minimize the burden on community school coordinators. We also understand and support changing the current prioritization in the bill to better address the needs of families who are homeless or most at risk of homelessness.

Maryland cannot be a national leader in leaving no one behind, ending childhood poverty, righting the racial wrongs of the past, and ensuring shelter for all without investing in eviction prevention funds.

MAP appreciates your consideration and urges the committee to issue a favorable report for SB 370.

Marylanders Against Poverty (MAP) is a coalition of service providers, faith communities, and advocacy organizations advancing statewide public policies and programs necessary to alleviate the burdens faced by Marylanders living in or near poverty, and to address the underlying systemic causes of poverty.

¹ <https://gardnercenter.stanford.edu/publications/study-homeless-and-highly-mobile-students-san-mateo-county/housing-instability-and>

² Mariah Kornbluh, et al., Exploring Housing Insecurity in Relation to Student Success, J Am Coll Health, Apr. 2022.

³ Health Care for the Homeless, Homelessness in Maryland, <https://www.hchmd.org/homelessness-maryland> (last visited Dec. 1, 2023).

PJC testimony SB 370 FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Matt Hill

Position: FAV

**SB 370 – Community Schools - Rental Assistance for Community School Families Program
and Fund – Establishment**

Hearing of the Budget and Taxation Committee, January 31, 2024

Position: Favorable

Public Justice Center urges you to support SB 370, which will create an eviction prevention funds program for families with children enrolled in Maryland’s community schools. Public Justice Center (PJC) is a nonprofit public interest law firm that assists over 800 renters and their families each year. As part of Renters United Maryland, we stand with tenants to protect and expand their rights to safe, habitable, affordable, and non-discriminatory housing. Eviction prevention funds are often life changing for our client-families with children facing eviction. Magdalena Escobar’s experience provides an example:



Magdalena Escobar, her husband, and three children have resided in their Greenbelt apartment for the past five years. Ms. Escobar had to leave her job as a cook in a local restaurant to take care of the significant, emerging medical needs of her son. At the same time, her husband lost hours at his job. They quickly fell behind on the rent and faced an eviction filing. They applied for eviction prevention funds from Prince George’s County to help pay the back-due rent, and retained an attorney from CASA to negotiate a lower rent. They received the eviction prevention funds in September 2023, and it changed their lives: “Eviction prevention funds were a huge relief. I had an eviction scheduled for the next week, and after so many calls and help from CASA, the funds came through. My kids didn’t want to go to school because they were worried they were going to come home and our things would be on the street. My son and daughter were already struggling at school, and the pending eviction made it so much worse. When we told the kids the rent had been paid, they were so happy that they started shouting and yelling. Now they smile more and worry much less. Also, my lawyer learned that I was being charged the wrong amount of rent, so the landlord lowered the rent, making it more affordable. My husband is getting more hours at work, and we intend to stay in our neighborhood for the long term. I needed these funds, they really helped me, but I see lots of neighbors who still need this money. I got this help when I needed it, and I hope that others get this help when they need it to keep their families housed.”

The Blueprint for Maryland's Future is investing significant funds to assist families whose children are attending community schools. Located throughout Maryland, [Community Schools](#) provide support for families by coordinating wraparound services like transportation, healthcare, counseling, and healthy food. **Without an investment in eviction prevention funds, students in community schools who are evicted will lose ready access to the support of their community school.**

Preventing evictions stabilizes the family, the school, and the community. Families cannot thrive *without* safe, stable housing. Schools cannot thrive *with* a student body forced to live in unstable and deplorable conditions.

[According to a recent research report by Stout Risius Ross on eviction prevention funds in Maryland, a fully funded program would more than pay for itself. Every dollar spent on eviction prevention saves the State \\$2.39.](#) A full \$40 million investment in eviction prevention would yield approximately \$92 million in cost savings or avoidance for the State by reducing homelessness and state-funded safety net costs. **On education alone, Stout estimated that a fully funded eviction prevention funds program (about \$40 million) would provide \$23.75 million in benefits to the State through better education outcomes for students and an increase in federal funds.**

Key Findings

- Maryland is investing \$3.8 billion a year to implement the Blueprint for Maryland's Future. Unfortunately, *the wrap-around services based in community schools do not include housing stability support.*
- Eviction prevention funds ensure that families do not lose access to community school services. And, according to Stout, *such a program would provide \$23.75 million in benefits to the state* through better education outcomes for students and an increase in federal funds.
- *Students facing eviction are 6 times more likely to be chronically absent and 4 times more likely to not complete high school,⁹ and students who experienced housing insecurity were more likely to have a lower GPA as well as poorer mental health outcomes.¹⁰*
- The National Center on Family Homelessness estimates that the *graduation rate of children experiencing homelessness is less than 25%.¹¹*

Eviction prevention through rental assistance furthers gender and racial equity. Women-led (70%) and Black-led (74%) households have avoided eviction with help from the state's current emergency rental assistance program and likely will be evicted at much higher rates unless the Governor and General Assembly take action.

We understand that the bill sponsor, Sen. Hettleman, will work with advocates, the Maryland State Dept. of Education, and the Dept. of Housing and Community Development to refine the administrative structure of the program and minimize the burden on community school coordinators. We also understand and support changing the current prioritization in the bill. **Maryland cannot be a national leader in leaving no one behind, ending childhood poverty, righting the racial wrongs of the past, and ensuring shelter for all without investing in eviction prevention funds.**

Public Justice Center is a member of Renters United Maryland and urges you to move **favorable on SB 370.** For more information contact: Matt Hill, 410-625-9409, ext. 229, hillm@publicjustice.org

MMHA - 2024 - SB 370.pdf

Uploaded by: Matthew Pipkin

Position: FAV



Senate Bill 370

Committee: Budget and Taxation Committee

Bill: Senate Bill 370, Community Schools - Rental Assistance for Community School Families Program and Fund - Establishment

Date: January 30, 2024

Position: Favorable

The Maryland Multi-Housing Association (MMHA) is a professional trade association established in 1996, whose members house more than 538,000 residents of the State of Maryland. MMHA's membership consists of owners and managers of more than 210,000 rental housing homes in over 958 apartment communities and more than 250 associate member companies who supply goods and services to the multi-housing industry.

Senate Bill 370 ("SB 370") seeks to establish the Rental Assistance for Community School Families Program to provide rental assistance to eligible student households. This bill requires the State Department of Education, in consultation with the Department of Housing and Community Development, to administer this program through community school counselors tasked with identifying and offering various financial assistance to eligible student households. SB 370 also dedicates \$10,000,000 to the fund in the FY26 budget.

Evictions are disruptive to residents and housing providers. Most of all, it has an impact on minor children. MMHA supports this legislation and offers its appreciation to the sponsor for bringing this legislation forward. As the COVID-19 pandemic taught us, we would ask that flexibility be given to the administration of this fund. A program such as this needs to be simple and have as few strings as possible to help incentivize housing providers to participate. MMHA also recognizes the budgetary realities of this budget season and would like to ask that this program not be funded at the expense of increasing filings fees that are being proposed this session.

Please contact Matthew Pipkin, Jr. at (443) 995-4342 with any questions.

SB 370- NAACP Testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: NaShona Kess

Position: FAV



NAACP

Maryland
STATE CONFERENCE

**SB 370 – Community Schools – Rental Assistance for Community School Families Program and Fund –
Establishment
Hearing of the Budget and Taxation Committee, January 31, 2024
Position: Favorable**

January 31, 2024

The Honorable Senator Guy Guzzone, Chair
2 East, Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Honorable Chair Guzzone and Members of the Committee:

I am writing on behalf of the Maryland State Conference of the NAACP. We support Senate Bill 370, Community Schools – Rental Assistance for Community School Families Program and Fund-Establishment, which is currently before the Budget and Taxation Committee. We ask that all members of the committee support this very important legislation that provides necessary funding for children and their families, specifically low-income families, to retain housing when they are faced with an impending eviction.

This legislation is one measure to ensure that children and their families maintain stability, this will allow those children to stay in their home and the community school district that they are familiar with. Providing funding for eviction prevention through community schools provides additional resources and services directly to students and families without delay, which is why this investment into the community is important.

Research demonstrates that students who are housing insecure are 6 times more likely to be chronically absent and 4 times more likely to drop out of high school. For those who remain in school, they are more likely to have a lower GPA and poor mental health outcomes. The research shows that families thrive, and students are more likely to do better when they have safe and stable housing.

A report conducted by Stout Risius and Ross found that an investment of \$40 million would yield \$92 million in cost savings. (https://www.mdeconomy.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/Assessment-of-Marylands-Need-for-EPF-and-Directional-Fiscal-Impacts-of-EPF_FINAL_2023.12.19-1.pdf). The report further “quantified the following potential annual fiscal benefits to Maryland if EPF were implemented for tenant households at high risk of disruptive displacement:

- Economic impacts associated with employment and income stability – potentially \$21 million to \$32 million.
- Decrease in the need for housing social safety net responses such as emergency shelter and rapid re-housing – potentially \$19 million to \$28 million.
- Economic impacts associated with increased educational attainment for children - potentially \$18 million to \$27 million.



NAACP

Maryland
STATE CONFERENCE

- Decrease in the need for Medicaid spending on health care - potentially \$4 million to \$7 million.
- Retained economic value realized by minimizing out-migration - potentially \$4 million to \$6 million.
- Decrease in the need for publicly funded unemployment benefits - potentially \$3 million to \$5 million.
- Decrease in foster care costs for children experiencing homelessness - potentially \$2 million to \$3 million.
- Decrease in incarceration costs associated with criminalizing people experiencing homelessness - potentially \$2 million to \$3 million.
- Retained federal funding for Maryland public schools - potentially \$1 million to \$1.5 million.

According to evictionresearch.net, black households are 3 times more likely to face evictions. (<https://evictionresearch.net/maryland/report/baltimore.html#:~:text=46%25%20more%20female%20headed%20households,1%2C614%20White%20evictions>). They further state “eviction reinforces poverty and limits housing opportunities for the nation’s most economically vulnerable”. The NAACP advocates for the most vulnerable and this is why we believe this legislation cannot be ignored or delayed.

We recognize that this bill may need to be refined to minimize the burden on community school coordinators and we look forward to working with Sen. Hettleman and other advocates to ensure this bill will meet the needs of the vulnerable families that need this funding.

For these reasons, we support SB 370 and strongly urge your support to protect all the citizens of Maryland.

In Service,

NaShona Kess, Esq., MLS
Executive Director
Nashonakess.mdnaacp@gmail.com

SB370_MSEA_Zwerling_FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Samantha Zwerling

Position: FAV

SUPPORT
Senate Bill 370
Community Schools – Rental Assistance for Community School Families
Program and Fund - Establishment

Senate Budget & Taxation Committee
Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
January 31, 2024

Samantha Zwerling
Government Relations

The Maryland State Education Association supports Senate Bill 370, as amended by the sponsor, which would establish the Rental Assistance for Community School Families Program that would provide rental assistance for eligible student households at community schools. MSEA is a strong supporter of the creation and expansion of community schools and legislation that supports programs of assistance to eradicate systemic poverty including homelessness.

MSEA represents 75,000 educators and school employees who work in Maryland's public schools, teaching and preparing our almost 900,000 students so they can pursue their dreams. MSEA also represents 39 local affiliates in every county across the state of Maryland, and our parent affiliate is the 3 million-member National Education Association (NEA).

Research clearly demonstrates the harmful consequences that children may incur due to housing insecurity including effects on their health, development, and school performance.¹ The Blueprint for Maryland's Future contains critical components to promote academic, social, and emotional well-being for students to ensure they can thrive. Most notably here, that includes the creation and expansion of community schools throughout Maryland.

Senate Bill 370 builds on the progress and promise of community schools wrap around supports for students and families by establishing a rental assistance program to aid in keeping students and families in their homes. As the State has identified schools and communities that are most deeply impacted by

¹ Sonya Acosta, *Stable Housing is Foundational to Children's Well-Being*, Center on Budget and Policy Priorities (Feb. 15, 2022), <https://www.cbpp.org/blog/stable-housing-is-foundational-to-childrens-well-being>.



concentrated poverty, the resources under the Program would be one more thing to help ensure success for these students.

MSEA appreciates the amendments by the sponsor to broaden the scope of individuals who are responsible for administering and coordinating the program at the community school level. As introduced, the legislation required a community school coordinator to identify student households eligible for the program and be responsible for administering the program at the community school. In addition to their current existing job duties, MSEA is concerned community school coordinators may not have the capacity to solely be responsible for identifying eligible student households and being responsible for coordinating and administering payments to a variety of landlords and utility companies on behalf of student households. We appreciate the sponsor's amendment in this regard.

Students need stability in housing to be successful in school. This bill would help provide that to students and families who are especially vulnerable.

MSEA urges a favorable report on Senate Bill 370.

Wise Testimony SB 370 FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Sharron Wise

Position: FAV

Sharron Wise

SB 370 – Community Schools - Rental Assistance for Community School Families Program
Hearing on January 31, 2024

My name is Sharron Wise, and I am a mother living with my family in Baltimore City. I am asking the Committee to support SB 370, which would provide eviction prevention funds for families whose students are in community schools.

My youngest was born a few months ago, and I am currently on unpaid maternity leave from my job as a pre-school teacher to take care of them. I live in a single-family home that was divided into two apartments. Currently, I'm in a dispute with my landlord because I am being excessively charged for BGE services, but I am seeking legal help to fix this issue. When the weather started getting cold last year, I began to fall behind on rent because I had to keep my kids warm and the lights on while dealing with these excessive bills. To make matters worse, in September, I was in a car accident and lost wages because I was out of work for a few days. And then in October, my partner and I broke up, so now I am solely responsible for all of my family's bills.

Eviction prevention funds would greatly benefit me and my family. It would keep my children in their current schools and make sure they have a safe and consistent place to call home. My seven-year-old loves her teacher and her school, and I know changing her school would negatively affect her ability to learn and grow.

Just a little help with my rent to get past these financial setbacks would keep my family together. If we're forced to move, it will be very difficult to find somewhere to accommodate all of us – especially in the same school neighborhood where we currently live. I go back to work next week and, if I had the help of rental assistance, I would be current on my rent and be able to maintain monthly payments. Helping my students get a good, stable education is very important to me, so I ask the Committee to give a favorable report on SB 370.

Sharron Wise

SB370_Hettleman_FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Shelly Hettleman

Position: FAV

SHELLY HETTLEMAN
Legislative District 11
Baltimore County

Chair
Rules Committee

Budget and Taxation Committee

Subcommittees

Health and Human Services

Pensions



James Senate Office Building
11 Bladen Street, Room 203
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
410-841-3131 · 301-858-3131
800-492-7122 Ext. 3131
Shelly.Hettleman@senate.state.md.us

THE SENATE OF MARYLAND ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

TESTIMONY OF SENATOR SHELLY HETTLEMAN SB 370 COMMUNITY SCHOOLS – RENTAL ASSISTANCE FOR COMMUNITY SCHOOL FAMILIES PROGRAM AND FUND – ESTABLISH

The relationship between housing, education, and positive life outcomes is undeniable. Both housing and education have long been acknowledged as two significant social determinants of health, especially among youth and young people. SB370 seeks to establish a program meant to recognize and bolster the connection between these two facets of students' lives.

Schools play a significant role in the lives of youth as students typically spend a third or more of their days engaged in school-related activities. This time is generally only surpassed by the time individuals spend at home. However, for an alarming number of students, housing insecurity threatens this balance.

From January to October 2023, 18,399 families were evicted in Maryland. This is like 2019 numbers during the same period and more than a 75% increase from 2022.¹ Families with children make up more than 90% of households very likely to be evicted due to outstanding rent debts.² Many of these households are low-income and minority. Adverse effects due to childhood homelessness and housing insecurity have previously been noted regarding students' test scores, academic achievement, and attendance, among other outcomes.³

Community schools were established with a particular focus on addressing students holistically and acknowledging the important role that additional resources can play in ensuring success in the classroom and in life. Community schools are those which receive Concentration of Poverty Grants—funds dispersed in consideration of the percentage of students who live in poverty.⁴ This is impactful as a significant proportion of student live in poverty statewide.⁵ The General Assembly passed several pieces of substantial legislation in recent years to establish the Blueprint for Maryland's Future. Via the Blueprint, the state is on track to convert almost one-third of Maryland public schools into community schools by 2027.⁶

One of the main pillars of the Blueprint is to provide more resources for students to be successful, including via coordinating community support, investing into more in-school

¹ *MEPFA Policy Analysis*

² Maryland Emergency Rental Assistance Coalition, *Fact Sheet for 2023 Legislative Session*, NLIHC (2023), https://nlihc.org/sites/default/files/2022-03/2022AG_3-01_NHTF.pdf (last visited Jan 25, 2024).

³ See e.g., Rajeev Darolia & Andrew Sullivan, *The dynamics and measurement of high school homelessness and achievement*, 52 *Educational Researcher* 413–421 (2023).

⁴ *Office of Community Schools and Expanded Learning Time*, Maryland State Department of Education, <https://www.marylandpublicschools.org/about/Pages/DSFSS/Community-Schools/Index.aspx> (last visited Jan 24, 2024).

⁵ Community Schools - Maryland State Education Association, Maryland State Education Association - 76,000 Members Strong (2021), <https://marylandeducators.org/community-schools/> (last visited Jan 24, 2024).

⁶ Community Schools - Maryland State Education Association, Maryland State Education Association - 76,000 Members Strong (2021), <https://marylandeducators.org/community-schools/> (last visited Jan 24, 2024).

assistance, and facilitating wraparound services.⁷ SB370 seeks to establish a program to facilitate such services as they relate to housing.

A 2021 study found strong evidence that rental assistance leads to reduction in school absences due to illness, especially among adolescents.⁸ Additionally, according to the Maryland Eviction Prevention Fund Alliance (MEPFA), every \$1 spent on eviction prevention in Maryland saves the state \$2.39.⁹ The State has already invested significantly into policies under the Blueprint, with billions expected to be invested from the State and local governments combined over the next decade.¹⁰

Funds appropriated via SB370 would assist students and their families to avoid eviction and housing insecurity, ensuring that students' academic lives and overall wellbeing are not adversely affected by conditions which unfortunately impact many Maryland residents.

Through implementing a novel program, SB370 proposes to act as a safety net which maintains some of the housing assistance relief felt by many residents under COVID era policies. The Moore Administration's upcoming housing agenda, while comprehensive and wide-reaching, will require time to be fully implemented. SB370 seeks to ensure that in the interim, students and their families are able to remain in their homes and in their community schools.

I urge a favorable report on SB 370. Thank you

⁷ The 5 pillars, Accountability and Implementation Board (AIB), <https://aib.maryland.gov/Pages/5-Pillars.aspx> (last visited Jan 24, 2024).

⁸ Andrew Fenelon et al., *The benefits of rental assistance for Children's Health and school attendance in the United States*, 58 *Demography* 1171–1195 (2021).

⁹ *MEPFA Policy Analysis: Maryland's Need for Eviction Prevention Funds (EPF) and the Estimated Fiscal Impact of EPF*, mdeconomy (2023), https://www.mdeconomy.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/MEPFA-EPF-Policy-Analysis_v3.pdf (last visited Jan 21, 2024).

¹⁰ About blueprint, Accountability and Implementation Board (AIB), <https://aib.maryland.gov/Pages/about-blueprint.aspx#> (last visited Jan 24, 2024).

SB 370 - Community Schools - Rental Assistance for

Uploaded by: Tonaeya Moore

Position: FAV



**SB 370 - Community Schools - Rental Assistance for Community School Families Program and Fund -
Establishment
Budget and Taxation Committee
January 31, 2024
SUPPORT**

Chair Guzzone, Vice-Chair Rosapepe and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of Senate Bill 370. This bill will would establish a rental assistance fund for eligible families with children attending community schools in Maryland. A family may receive rental assistance for up to 12 months through this program.

The CASH Campaign of Maryland promotes economic advancement for low-to-moderate income individuals and families in Baltimore and across Maryland. CASH accomplishes its mission through operating a portfolio of direct service programs, building organizational and field capacity, and leading policy and advocacy initiatives to strengthen family economic stability. CASH and its partners across the state achieve this by providing free tax preparation services through the IRS program 'VITA', offering free financial education and coaching, and engaging in policy research and advocacy. **Almost 4,000 of CASH's tax preparation clients earn less than \$10,000 annually. More than half earn less than \$20,000.**

Over 100,000 families in Maryland benefited from the pandemic-era federally administered emergency rental assistance program, ensuring that they could stay in their homes.¹ SB 370 would establish a \$10,000,000 appropriated fund to be administered by the Maryland State Department of Education that would continue to support low-income families. There are multiple eligibility requirements that a family must meet to qualify for receiving the emergency rental assistance, including having a child who is enrolled in a community school that receives funding under the Concentration of Poverty School Grant Program.

Rent in Maryland is continuing to increase, making it harder for families to afford to stay in their homes. SB 370 addresses the disproportionate burden placed on Black families who are paying to live in Maryland. In a 2015 survey conducted by the Public Justice Center, ninety four percent (94%) of participant tenants who appeared for rent court in Baltimore City identified as African-American or Black, and eighty percent (80%) identified as women. These numbers play out similarly with evictions in Baltimore City – a Black female-headed household is 296% more likely to be evicted there than a white male-headed household.²

Research has shown that children who experience housing instability have poorer performance outcome in school. SB 370 is crucial to keep families housed and to ensure that children in Maryland community schools are set up for success.

Thus, we encourage you to return a favorable report for SB 370.

¹ MDCEP: <https://www.mdeconomy.org/mdcep-calls-on-legislature-governor-to-fund-emergency-rental-assistance/>

² PJC: https://publicjustice.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/JUSTICE_DIVERTED_PJC_DEC15.pdf

Social Work Advocates for Social Change Coalition_

Uploaded by: UM SWASC

Position: FAV

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SENATE BILL 370
Community Schools – Rental Assistance for Community School Families
Program and Fund – Establishment
Budget & Taxation Committee
January 31, 2024

Social Work Advocates for Social Change strongly supports SB 370, which will establish an eviction prevention program for eligible Community School families to receive funding for up to 12 months to cover the cost of rent and utility payments, late fees, and arrears. SB 370 establishes the Community School Coordinator as the distributor of such funds and identifies the State Department of Education, in consultation with the Department of Housing and Community Development as the program’s primary administrators.

SB 370 will increase the capacity of Community Schools to holistically support the needs of its families by going beyond academic services to support general family wellbeing. Educators have a stake in the holistic wellbeing and stability of its families; the Community School model already asserts its commitment to this in its mission to “promote positive, equitable outcomes by providing students and families with the physical and mental health, academic, and extracurricular supports needed to thrive”.¹ This funding will bolster the ability of Community Schools to meet family needs and promote their engagement in school services.

SB 370 will improve housing stability for Maryland’s school children and their families. It is well documented that housing security is a social determinant of health; the physical condition of a home, the conditions of the neighborhood, and housing affordability have significant implications for a family’s ability to establish permanency in their community.² Rising rent costs put undue financial burden on families, pushing many to choose between falling behind in rent and putting themselves at risk for eviction or meeting basic needs like nutritious food, preventative medical care, and heating, all needs that are important to the development of school-aged youth. In Maryland, over 125,000 families are paying more than 30% of their income toward rent and other housing-related costs.³ The eviction prevention funding provided to families from this fund could alleviate this burden and further promote the wellbeing of our

¹ Maryland State Department of Education. (n.d.). *Office of Community Schools and Expanded Learning Time*. <https://marylandpublicschools.org/about/Pages/DSFSS/Community-Schools/Index.aspx>

² Braveman, Paula, Mercedes Dekker, Susan Egerter, Tabashir Sadegh-Nobari, and Craig Pollack. 2011. “Housing and Health.” Issue Brief #7: Exploring the Social Determinants of Health. Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Commission to Build a Healthier America. <https://www.rwjf.org/en/library/research/2011/05/housing-and-health.html>.

³ Desmond M. Housing. In: Grusky D, Varner C, Mattingly M, eds. *State of the Union: The Poverty and Inequality Report*. Stanford, CA: Stanford Center on Poverty and Inequality; 2017:16-19.

Maryland Community School families.

SB 370 will contribute positively to academic engagement and performance, ensuring greater equity in outcomes for Maryland’s students. Children whose families are navigating housing instability, poverty, and unsafe living conditions are “profoundly affected by their environments during key developmental stages”.⁴ Research indicates that “adolescents living in poor-quality housing have lower math and reading scores” compared to their peers and “substandard housing” is one of the strongest predictors for behavioral and emotional problems in young children.⁵

SB 370 furthers racial and gender justice. Black households and households led by women have avoided eviction at disproportionately high rates – 74% and 70%, respectively – as a result of the state’s current emergency rental assistance program.⁶ Such households will likely face significantly higher rates of eviction unless the Governor and General Assembly take actions like SB 370.

We understand that the bill sponsor, Sen. Hettleman, will work with advocates, the Maryland State Dept. of Education, and the Dept. of Housing and Community Development to refine the administrative structure of the program and minimize the burden on Community School Coordinators. We also understand and support changing the current prioritization in the bill to better address the needs of families who are homeless or most at risk of homelessness.

Housing stability is integral to the security and success of Maryland’s students in Community Schools. The development of an eviction prevention program is a significant step forward in maintaining safety nets that support family stability in their school neighborhoods, further promoting family engagement and removing barriers to student learning and participation.

Social Work Advocates for Social Change urges a favorable report on SB 370.

Social Work Advocates for Social Change is a coalition of MSW students at the University of Maryland School of Social Work that seeks to promote equity and justice through public policy, and to engage the communities impacted by public policy in the policymaking process.

⁴ MacArthur Foundation. (n.d.). *Housing: Why Educators, Health Professionals and Those Focused on Economic Mobility Should Care About It*. MacArthur Foundation.

https://www.macfound.org/media/files/why_educators_health_professionals_those_focused_economic_mobility_should_care.pdf

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Emily Badger, Claire Cain Miller, and Alicia Parlapiano, The Americans Most Threatened by Eviction: Young Children, N.Y. Times, October 2, 2023, <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/02/upshot/evictions-children-american-renters.html>

Health Care for the Homeless - 2024 SB 370 FAV - R

Uploaded by: Vicky Stewart

Position: FAV

HEALTH CARE FOR THE HOMELESS TESTIMONY
IN SUPPORT OF
**SB 370 - Community Schools - Rental Assistance for Community
School Families Program and Fund - Establishment**

Senate Budget and Taxation Committee
January 31, 2024



Health Care for the Homeless strongly supports SB 370, which would establish an eviction prevention funds program for families with children enrolled in Maryland’s community schools. Preventing evictions is a critical piece of how we prevent and end homelessness and, as such, this bill is a top priority for Health Care for the Homeless.

We know that there is a plethora of health risks associated with the disruptive displacement caused by eviction. Following an eviction, a person’s likelihood of experiencing homelessness significantly increases. Homelessness historically creates new health problems and exacerbates existing ones. Where you or I could easily manage something like diabetes or hypertension in the year 2022, even HIV, the disruptive displacement following an eviction makes caring for these things exponentially harder and sometimes impossible.

Mortality among those experiencing homelessness has escalated over the last 5-10 years. On December 21, 2023, Health Care for the Homeless gathered for our annual Homeless Persons’ Memorial Day in which we remembered the lives of hundreds of people with the experience of homelessness who died last year. There is no amount of health care that can substitute stable housing. As stable housing impacts every aspect of a person’s life, stable housing is a critical component of every child’s education.

Health Care for the Homeless Lead Therapist Case Manager Tammy Montague, LCSW-C, shared her experience working with a family who was at risk of eviction because funding was not available. Ms. Montague shared that eviction prevention funding keeps families together and kids in school. But it devastates children in more ways than education. Ms. Montague shared the story of helping a family with a little girl prevent an eviction just before Christmas. She asked the girl, Maddie,¹ what she wanted for Christmas and Maddie asked for a Barbie dream house, an easy bake oven, and a chimney. When Tammy asked why a chimney, Maddie responded because Santa need a way to bring her gifts. All she wanted for Christmas was a home. Ms. Montague described Maddie’s Christmas request as “heart wrenching” and “devastating.”

A new report from the [Maryland Center on Economic Policy](#), Maryland Eviction Prevention Funds Alliance and Stout, *Assessment of Maryland’s Need for Eviction Prevention Funds (EPF) and the Estimated Fiscal Impact of EPF*, provided specific evidence of how devastating an eviction is on a children and families. And, particularly, how eviction prevention funding can prevent this type of devastation. The study revealed that “[f]amilies experiencing homelessness who were given rental assistance were less than half as likely as families who were not given rental assistance to have a child placed in out-of-home foster care.”² Further, the report noted that “[s]chool-aged children who experience homelessness face significant mental and

¹ Name changed for privacy and confidentiality.

² Stout, *Assessment of Maryland’s Need for Eviction Prevention Funds (EPF) and the Estimated Fiscal Impact of EPF (2023)*, page 24, available at [Maryland's Need for Eviction Prevention Funds | Maryland Center on Economic Policy \(mdeconomy.org\)](#).

physical health challenges that prevent students from focusing on their education. These challenges can result in students experiencing homelessness to become chronically absent from school. Even after just one year of chronic absenteeism, students are significantly less likely to complete high school.”³

Preventing evictions is a critical part of creating a Maryland where all families can have safe, stable, affordable housing. And eviction prevention funds categorically stop families from experiencing homelessness. Even a narrowly tailored program focused on preventing homelessness or supporting families whose children are enrolled in a community school generates exponential benefits for children, particularly Black and Brown children in poverty.

We understand that the bill sponsor, Senator Hettleman, will work with advocates, the Maryland State Dept. of Education, and the Dept. of Housing and Community Development to refine the administrative structure of the program and minimize the burden on community school coordinators. We also understand and support changing the current prioritization in the bill to better address the needs of families who are homeless or most at risk of homelessness. We support these efforts as the General Assembly works to pass this critical legislation.

The importance of the stability of housing in a child’s life cannot be understated. For the health and safety of the children and families we serve and for all Marylanders, Health Care for the Homeless urges a favorable report on SB 370.

Health Care for the Homeless is Maryland’s leading provider of integrated health services and supportive housing for individuals and families experiencing homelessness. We deliver medical care, mental health services, state-certified addiction treatment, dental care, social services, housing support services, and housing for over 10,000 Marylanders annually at sites in Baltimore City and Baltimore County.

Our Vision: Everyone is healthy and has a safe home in a just and respectful community.

Our Mission: We work to end homelessness through racially equitable health care, housing and advocacy in partnership with those of us who have experienced it.

For more information, visit www.hchmd.org.

³ *Id.* at page 26.

Oral Testimony for Maryland Senate Bill 370 1.30 F

Uploaded by: David Wheaton

Position: FWA

Oral Testimony for Maryland Senate Bill 370

Good afternoon. My name is David Wheaton, and I am an attorney with the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. (LDF). I am speaking in favor of Maryland Senate Bill 370. SB 370 would establish the Rental Assistance for Community School Families Program to help eligible student households avoid eviction. Housing stability is essential to children's well-being, development, and school performance. Unfortunately, Black children in Maryland are disproportionately likely to experience eviction and the significant negative consequences that result. SB 370 would improve outcomes for children, particularly Black children, by offering rental assistance funds to help families with school-aged children who are at risk of eviction stay in their homes, improving their educational and health outcomes.

Evictions disrupt nearly every facet of a family's life and negatively impact child health and development.¹ A Harvard Medical School study showed that an eviction can affect a child's health both through its acute effects and its cascading consequences that span multiple stages and settings of child development.² These consequences include school attendance issues, mental health issues, harms to neurodevelopment, and overall child health.³

Childhood eviction significantly and disproportionately disadvantages Black children. Nearly 20 percent of children born to Black mothers experience eviction, compared with only 11.3 percent of children born to white mothers.⁴ Black households have the highest eviction removal count in Maryland—almost three times higher than the white resident eviction rate.⁵ One in four Black Maryland children in rental households face the threat of eviction in a typical year.⁶ An estimated 16,200 Maryland school children lived in shelters, on the street, doubled up with other families, or in hotels or motels during the year before the pandemic.⁷ These numbers have increased in recent years as local, state, and national eviction moratoriums have expired and pandemic-related financial assistance has ended.

As currently written SB 370 gives someone's employment status as a way to determine if a family member is experiencing financial hardship. We believe that the program should be

¹ Ramphal B, Keen R, Okuzuno SS, Ojogho D, Slopen N, *Evictions and Infant and Child Health Outcomes: A Systematic Review*, JAMA Netw Open, (2023), <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamanetworkopen/fullarticle/2803667>.

² Id.

³ Id.

⁴ Cleo Bluthenthal, *The Disproportionate Burden of Eviction on Black Women*, Center for American Progress, (August 14, 2023), <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/the-disproportionate-burden-of-eviction-on-black-women/>

⁵ Tim Thomas, et al, *Baltimore Eviction Map*, The Eviction Study, (May 8, 2020), <https://evictionresearch.net/maryland/report/baltimore.html#:~:text=Black%20headed%20households%20had%20the,eviction%20rate%20of%205.2%25>).

⁶ Maryland Eviction Prevention Funds Alliance, *Assessment of Maryland's Need for Eviction Prevention Funds (EPF) and the Estimated Fiscal Impact of EPF*, (December 19, 2023), https://www.mdeconomy.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/Assessment-of-Marylands-Need-for-EPF-and-Directional-Fiscal-Impacts-of-EPF_FINAL_2023.12.19-1.pdf

⁷ Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, *Federal Rental Assistance Fact Sheets: Maryland*, (January 19, 2022), <https://www.cbpp.org/research/federal-rental-assistance-fact-sheets#MD>.

available to people who are working or receive federal benefits but are nevertheless at risk of eviction, not just those experiencing unemployment.

Rental assistance like what is offered in SB 370 offers the opportunity for families to fight housing instability and reduce the number of evictions. Researchers found that similar federal rental assistance programs both improved the consistency of school attendance for children and decreased the number of families living in shelters.⁸ By reducing homelessness, housing instability, and poverty, rental assistance helps children avoid the adverse effects these problems have on their health, development, and education.⁹

For the reasons stated above, LDF strongly encourages the passage of SB 370 and urges that more funding be directed to expanding rental assistance programs across the state.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. If you have any questions, please contact David Wheaton, Economic Justice Policy Fellow, at dwheaton@naacpldf.org, or Amalea Smirniotopoulos, Senior Policy Counsel and Co-Manager of the Equal Protection Initiative, at asmirniotopoulos@naacpldf.org.

⁸ Maryland Eviction Prevention Funds Alliance, *Assessment of Maryland's Need for Eviction Prevention Funds (EPF) and the Estimated Fiscal Impact of EPF*, (December 19, 2023), https://www.mdeconomy.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/Assessment-of-Marylands-Need-for-EPF-and-Directional-Fiscal-Impacts-of-EPF_FINAL_2023.12.19-1.pdf.

⁹ WILL FISCHER, DOUGLAS RICE, AND ALICIA MAZZARA, *Research Shows Rental Assistance Reduces Hardship and Provides Platform to Expand Opportunity for Low-Income Families*, Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, (December 5, 2019), <https://www.cbpp.org/research/housing/research-shows-rental-assistance-reduces-hardship-and-provides-platform-to-expand>.

MD4CS_MOST_SB370.pdf

Uploaded by: Ellie Mitchell

Position: FWA



Senate Bill 370/House Bill 428
POSITION: SUPPORT
Budget & Taxation Committee – January 31, 2024
Position: Favorable with Amendments

The Maryland Out of School Time Network (MOST) is a statewide organization dedicated to closing opportunity gaps by expanding both the quantity and quality of afterschool and summer learning opportunities for school-aged young people. MOST serves as the backbone organization for the Maryland Coalition for Community Schools. The Maryland Coalition for Community Schools, founded in 2016, advocates for student and family success by leading the charge to expand the Community School Model in Maryland. The Maryland Education Coalition (MEC) advocates for adequate funding, equitable policies, and transparent accountability statewide.

Community School Coordinators across Maryland, as part of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future requirements, conduct needs assessments for their schools, the students, families, and the surrounding communities. A common theme across schools and jurisdictions is that one of the top challenges facing families experiencing poverty is stable housing. Many of the programs that received boosts from federal recovery dollars are expiring. Often, families also need help navigating complicated systems to access support. SB 370 directly answers this challenge by creating a fund through which Community School Coordinators can directly assist families. The addition of \$10 Million dollars may not cover the full need or demand but can make a significant difference school by school. This strategy can also address student mobility, affecting school climate and student achievement.

MOST and MD4CS strongly support SB 370, and we have a few suggested amendments to strengthen the bill. Because housing programs are within its expertise, we believe Maryland's Department of Housing and Community Development should administer the housing assistance grants under this legislation. Additionally, we believe MSDE and MDHCD should collaborate to provide training for Community School Coordinators on the landscape of available housing support programs to help families qualify and access existing support pathways. Lastly, for school districts that don't currently have Community Schools, we believe this fund should be accessible through the School District's homeless services liaison. We urge the committee to provide a favorable report with amendments for SB 370 and thank Senator Hettleman for sponsoring this bill.

Rick Tyler, Co-Chair, MEC, md.ed.coalition@gmail.com
Ellie Mitchell, Co-Chair, MEC & Executive Director, MOST Network/MD4CS,
emitchell@mostnetwork.org

Maryland Out of School Time Network / Maryland Coalition for Community Schools

1500 Union Ave / Suite 2300
Baltimore MD 21211 / 410 374-7692
www.mostnetwork.org

SB 370_realtors_fwa.pdf

Uploaded by: William Castelli

Position: FWA



Senate Bill 370 – Community Schools – Rental Assistance for Community School Families Program and Fund - Establishment

Position: Support with Amendment

The Maryland REALTORS® support 370 which will create the Rental Assistance for Community School Families Program.

In addition to representing approximately 30,000 Maryland real estate licensees, the Maryland REALTORS® also represent many licensees who manage residential rental property across the state. It is common for these property managers to work in different counties.

SB 370 creates a fund that a community school coordinator can access to help students and their families who are facing housing instability, homelessness or financial hardship. Property managers across the state are experienced with handling rental voucher programs and other rental assistance across the state and encourage these programs to be as uniform as possible in terms of how rental assistance is transmitted to rental property owners.

The REALTORS® recommend that the Director of the Community Schools Program reach out to rental property owners to identify best practices to ensure these programs work effectively for students across local school systems.

**For more information contact lisa.may@mdrealtor.org or
christa.mcgee@mdrealtor.org**

Amendment:

On page 3, after line 3, insert:

- (i) The Director shall seek input from tenant organizations and rental property providers to develop payment disbursement guidelines for recipients of rental assistance under the program.

SB 370 Statement of Information 1.30.24.pdf

Uploaded by: Laura Vykol-Gray

Position: INFO



Maryland

DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET
AND MANAGEMENT

WES MOORE
Governor

ARUNA MILLER
Lieutenant Governor

HELENE GRADY
Secretary

MARC L. NICOLE
Deputy Secretary

SENATE BILL 370 Income Tax - Community Schools - Rental Assistance for Community School Families Program and Fund - Establishment

STATEMENT OF INFORMATION

DATE: January 30, 2024

COMMITTEE: Ways and Means Committee

SUMMARY OF BILL: Senate Bill 370 establishes the Rental Assistance for Community School Families Program and related fund to provide rental assistance to eligible student households at community schools. The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) must administer the program, and the Governor must include an appropriation of \$10 million in the fiscal 2026 budget.

EXPLANATION: Senate Bill 370 establishes a \$10 million general fund mandate starting in fiscal 2026, and annually thereafter. Special fund revenues and expenditures increase commensurately.

The Department of Budget and Management (DBM) is charged with submitting a balanced budget to the General Assembly annually and will be working with the General Assembly to achieve structural balance over the long-term. In light of current projected general fund deficits in fiscal 2026 forward, the Department urges caution in passing legislation significantly increasing general fund expenditures. State government must be intentional, disciplined, and strategic with its allocation of State funding to ensure maximum impact toward priority outcomes.

It would be challenging for the State to manage this additional general fund mandate given the forecasted out-year deficits for the General Fund.

**For additional information, contact Laura Vykol-Gray at
(410) 260-6371 or laura.vykol@maryland.gov**

SB 370 Letter of Information_Final.pdf

Uploaded by: Laurel Cratsley

Position: INFO

For a program of this size and complexity, a unit (or branch) within the Department would need to be established and staffed to develop eligibility systems, conduct training, provide support for community school liaisons, and create and manage the fiscal component of this legislation.

Specialists would be needed to support community school coordinators, validate eligibility, approve families for financial support, and track payments over time. A preliminary estimate is that the total staffing cost would be approximately \$900,000 to \$1,000,000. This is approximately 10% of the \$10,000,000 fund and aligns with the costs of staff relative to the total grant in managing large grant programs.

Currently, the Community Schools team is comprised of one Executive Director and one Coordinator. In FY 2024, 454 community schools in 22 local education agencies (LEAs) receiving Concentration of Poverty Grants. As more schools become eligible for Concentration of Poverty funds, the total number of community schools in Maryland is projected to exceed 550 by 2027. The current duties of the team include providing support and professional development to LEAs and Community School leaders. As schools are identified, MSDE reviews and approves a comprehensive needs assessment and implementation plan. The implementation plan must be reviewed and updated every three years. In any given year, at least 150 community schools will be conducting this review.

Additional Resources

The Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) includes programs to assist renters. These include the Emergency Rental Assistance program to serve renters who are in arrears with rent and/or utility payments. The Emergency Rental Assistance program has locations to apply in every county. Note that the proposed program has specific eligibility criteria and ways to access help that may be different from those of the Emergency Rental Assistance program.

Many direct services agencies, nonprofits, churches, community-based organizations, and local governments provide emergency rental and utility assistance. These groups have expertise in housing, the rental market, and identifying unscrupulous landlords, among other areas. They typically provide counseling to find longer-term solutions and can address other needs of the renter.

The expectations as noted in the bill are not aligned with the responsibilities of MSDE.

Please contact Akilah Alleyne, Ph.D., Executive Director of Governmental Affairs, at 410-767-0504, or akilah.alleyne@maryland.gov, if additional information is needed.