



**February 7, 2024**

**Senate Bill 459  
Grant Applications and Reporting-Maryland Efficient Grant Application Council-  
Alterations  
Senate Budget and Taxation Committee**

**Position: SUPPORT**

The Maryland Association of Resources for Families and Youth (MARFY) is an association of private child caring organizations providing foster care, group homes, and other services through more than 200 programs across Maryland. The members of MARFY represent providers who serve Maryland's most vulnerable children who are in out of home placements due to abuse, neglect or severe mental health, and medical needs. We operate group homes, treatment foster care programs and independent living programs, primarily serving the foster care population as well as a juvenile services population.

If passed, Senate Bill 459 would address the work of the MEGA Council that was seriously obstructed by the pandemic. Senate Bill 459 would also address the lack of staff support during the last administration. While the authorizing legislation continues in effect until June 2025, Senate Bill 459 would extend the date to a more realistic goal for completion, June 2028. Senate Bill 459 also includes the Comptroller and Legislative Auditor, or their designees to the Council, and charge the Council to study and make recommendations on the creation of a “STATE GRANTS OMBUDSPERSON TO PROVIDE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE WITH:ACCESSING AND NAVIGATING STATE GRANT PROGRAMS; RESOLVING DELAYS IN THE GRANT-MAKING PROCESS; AND COLLECTING AND DISSEMINATING INFORMATION ON OPPORTUNITIES FOR GRANTS FROM FEDERAL, STATE, AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT”

MARFY is a nonprofit organization that relies on grant funding, for budgeting and financial planning. Senate Bill 459 would support MARFY’s efforts to make important changes in a more efficient and smooth application process. Timely funding helps maintain the enthusiasm and motivation for our members and providers. Experience has shown that both the Legislative Auditor and

Comptroller have functions that intersect with the efficiency effectiveness of the grants process, and expertise valuable to the work of the Council. Creation of an Ombudsman in the Governor's Office would certainly help to expedite attention to and resolution of what seem to be everyday problems with the timely release and approval of grant announcements and agreements, payment terms and delays, and invoicing requirements. This would be extremely helpful in the remaining time before substantial reform is accomplished changes.

**It is for these reasons we politely ask for a favorable report on Senate Bill 459.**

**For more information call or email:**

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