



**Testimony in SUPPORT of HB428
Community Schools - Rental Assistance for Community School Families Program and
Fund - Establishment**

Senate - Budget and Taxation Committee
Jose Coronado-Flores , On Behalf of CASA

March 26th, 2024

Dear Honorable Chair Guzzone and Members of the Committee,

CASA is pleased to offer **favorable testimony in support of HB428**, because it is important legislation that will address the need for emergency rental assistance funds in order to prevent evictions.

In particular, CASA is invested in seeing this bill pass, because many of our working-class members are a single emergency expenditure away from not being able to pay their rent. We see community schools as excellent liaisons in connecting families in need of rental support. Right now, community schools provide support for families by coordinating wrap around 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 schools.

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.

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, CASA urges a favorable report.

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