

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>