



House Bill 680

Children's Cabinet Fund - Renaming and Funding for Grants to Local Management Boards

MACo Position: **SUPPORT**

To: Appropriations Committee

Date: March 10, 2026

From: Karrington Anderson and Kevin Kinally

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS** HB 680. This bill strengthens Maryland's commitment to children and families by renaming the Children's Cabinet Fund and establishing a dedicated, increasing funding stream for grants to Local Management Boards (LMBs).

This bill requires annual appropriations above the prior fiscal year's level, \$3 million in FY 2028 and a \$2 million increase in each of the following three fiscal years, ensuring that investments grow to meet rising needs. Maryland's 24 Local Management Boards are a vital component of community-based collaboration. Active in every jurisdiction, LMBs function as quasi-authorities of local government, bringing together schools, nonprofits, service providers, and county leaders to coordinate child- and family-serving programs. They are uniquely positioned to identify local needs and deploy resources strategically and efficiently.

LMBs support a wide range of initiatives that strengthen communities, including reducing youth homelessness and child hunger, mitigating the impact of incarceration on families, and preventing costly out-of-state residential placements. These efforts not only improve outcomes for children but also reduce long-term costs to state and local governments.

Despite growing responsibilities, State support has not kept pace. The Children's Cabinet Interagency Fund has declined from \$47 million in 2011 to just \$21 million in 2026. At the same time, demand for services has surged. During the pandemic alone, LMBs served more than 530,000 Marylanders, more than double pre-pandemic levels, demonstrating both their reach and their critical importance.

HB 680 represents a measured approach to rebuilding this essential funding stream. By establishing predictable, incremental increases, the bill provides stability to local partners while reinforcing the State's commitment to coordinated, community-based solutions. For these reasons, MACo respectfully requests a **FAVORABLE** report on HB 680.