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SB 668 Children's Cabinet Fund – Renaming and Funding for Grants to Local Management Boards

To: Chair Ben Barnes, Vice-Chair Anne R. Kaiser, and Distinguished Members of the House Appropriations Committee
From: Demaune A. Millard, President & CEO, Family League

Date: March 23, 2026

Chair Barnes, Vice-Chair Kaiser, and Members of the Appropriations Committee,

I am Demaune Millard, President and CEO of Family League of Baltimore (Family League)—the Local Management Board (LMB) of the City of Baltimore and a proud member of the Maryland Association of Local Management Boards (MALMB). I am writing in strong support of SB 668/HB 680 as the legislation returns to the House following Senate referral.

WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE DO

Family League is a leading family-resources organization serving Baltimore, connecting thousands of families with services, support, and advocacy to raise healthy, thriving children. We bring together schools, health systems, housing agencies, workforce partners, behavioral health providers, and community-based organizations to ensure that families in Baltimore's most under-resourced neighborhoods don't fall through the cracks. In a city where one in three children live in poverty—more than 30,000 children—this coordination is not optional, It is essential.

The results of this work are measurable. Through our partnerships and braided funding model—combining Children's Cabinet Interagency Fund (CCIF) dollars with city appropriations, philanthropic investment, and federal resources—Family League generates more than $2 in total community value to every $1 of state investment. Statewide, Maryland's 24 LMBs collectively leverage $3 for every $1 invested. That is not just efficient government—that is government that works.

A NAME THAT MATCHES THE MISSION, FUNDING THAT MEETS THE MOMENT

The core funding that sustains this infrastructure has been quietly eroding for over a decade. Since 2011, the CCIF has been cut from $47 million to approximately $$21 million in FY2026—a more than 55% reduction—even as the demand for services has grown dramatically. During the pandemic, LMBs statewide served over 530,000 Marylanders, a 150% surge from pre-pandemic levels. The elevated need has not receded. Economic pressures, persistent inequity, and now federal funding uncertainty are placing extraordinary strain on local systems across every jurisdiction in this state.

SB 668/HB 680 addresses both the structural and symbolic dimensions of this challenge. Renaming the CCIF to more accurately reflect its purpose as a direct grant fund for LMBs is a meaningful signal—it clarifies what this money does and who it serves. More critically, this bill charts a phased path forward restoring sustainable funding.

Family League is aware of and supportive of the State's modifications to the fiscal year appropriation schedule, which reflect a more measured and fiscally responsible approach:

- FY2028: $1 million increase (revised from $3 million)
- FY2029: $500,000 increase (revised from $2 million)
- FY2030: $500,000 increase (revised from $2 million)
- FY2031: $500,000 increase (revised from $2 million)

While these figures represent a more gradual ramp-up than originally proposed, Family League recognizes and appreciates the Senate's commitment to incrementally rebuilding funding for LMBs. Any increase is a step in the right direction and demonstrates that the legislature understands the critical role LMBs play across all 24 Maryland jurisdictions. We look forward to continued investment in future sessions as the case for full restoration continues to be made.

This is not a new program. It is an investment in proven infrastructure that already exists in all 24 jurisdictions, serving Maryland's most vulnerable children and families.

In Baltimore, this funding directly advances the Governor's ENOUGH Initiative, which Family League helps implement across the city's highest-poverty neighborhoods—Cherry Hill, Park Heights, Greater Mondawmin, Southwest Baltimore, and beyond. We support grantees who are doing the hard, place-based work of transforming neighborhoods. We build their capacity. We connect them to data and resources. We quarterback cross-sector collaboration. None of that coordination is possible without a sustainable funding floor, and that floor is what SB 668/HB 680 begins to restore.

Governor Moore has said that to fully address poverty, you need to engage the people on the ground. LMBs are how the state does exactly that—in every county and in Baltimore. We are not overhead. We are the administrative backbone and infrastructure that makes every other investment go further.

I urge this Committee to move for a favorable report on SB668 /HB 680 as amended by the Senate. Fund the work that is already working. Invest in the infrastructure that communities across Maryland depend on. The children of Baltimore—and every jurisdiction in this state—deserve nothing less.

Respectfully submitted,

Demaune A. Millard
President & CEO, Family League of Baltimore
Baltimore City Local Management Board Member,
Maryland Association of Local Management Boards