



OF BALTIMORE

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## House Appropriations Committee

### HB 680 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 6, 2025

Chair, Vice-Chair, and Members of the Committee,

I am Demaune Millard, President and CEO for League of Baltimore—City of Baltimore's Local Management Board (LMB) and a proud member of the Maryland Association of Local Management Boards (MALMB). I am here today in strong support of HB 680, and honored to stand alongside my fellow MALMB members from Howard, Dorchester, and Anne Arundel Counties in offering this unified voice.

#### WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE DO

Family League of Baltimore (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 make sure 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 for 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

And yet, 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 – 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.

HB 680 addresses both the structural and symbolic dimensions of this challenge. Renaming 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. But more critically, this bill charts a phased path to restore funding toward \$30 million by FY2030, beginning with a \$3 million increase in FY2027. 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 Act, 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 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 HB 680. 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