



House Ways and Means Committee
March 11, 2026

House Bill 1278 – *Maryland Positive Youth Development Commission and Fund – Establishment*
POSITION: SUPPORT

The Maryland Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics (MDAAP) is a statewide association representing more than 1,100 pediatricians and allied pediatric and adolescent healthcare practitioners in the State and is a strong and established advocate promoting the health and safety of all the children we serve. On behalf of MDAAP, we submit this letter of **support** for House Bill 1278.

Pediatricians care not only for the physical health of children but also for the social and environmental conditions that shape their development. Research and clinical experience consistently show that young people thrive when they have access to safe environments, supportive relationships with adults, and opportunities to build skills, confidence, and a sense of belonging in their communities.

Positive youth development programs, such as mentoring, leadership programs, afterschool enrichment, and workforce readiness initiatives play a critical role in promoting healthy youth development. These programs help young people develop social and emotional skills, stay engaged in school, and build connections that support long-term health and success. They also serve as an important protective factor against risks, such as violence exposure, substance use, and school disengagement.

House Bill 1278 would help ensure that communities across Maryland have access to resources that support these youth development opportunities. By creating a dedicated fund for positive youth development programs, this legislation represents an important investment in prevention and in the long-term health and well-being of Maryland's youth. Supporting youth in this way strengthens communities, improves educational and health outcomes, and helps young people reach their full potential.

For these reasons, MDAAP respectfully urges a favorable report on House Bill 1278.

For more information call:

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