

**Alexis Seth, Sport Her Power LLC**

**HB1278- Maryland Positive Youth Development Commission & Fund**  
**Hearing before the Ways & Means Committee, March 11, 2026**  
**Position: Favorable**

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Dear Chair Wilkins, Vice Chair Feldmark, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Alexis Swth, and I am a coach and advocate for girls youth sports participation in Greater Baltimore through my emerging organization, Sport Her Power LLC. I respectfully urge a favorable report on HB1278.

HB1278 establishes the Maryland Positive Youth Development Commission and a dedicated, nonlapsing Positive Youth Development Fund within MSDE to support community-based programming for youth birth–25.

The bill reflects what public health and education leaders increasingly recognize: excessive and unregulated social media use is associated with increased risks to youth mental health, including anxiety, depression, sleep disruption, and social isolation. At the same time, Maryland lacks a dedicated, sustainable funding mechanism for prevention through youth development programming outside school hours.

Research consistently shows that protective factors — consistent adult relationships, structured time, skill-building, and opportunities for belonging — reduce risk behaviors and strengthen resilience. Afterschool programs, summer learning, mentoring, and community-based initiatives provide exactly these conditions.

Maryland continues to rank in the bottom tier nationally for afterschool access, despite strong parent demand. Without safe, supervised environments, many youth default to screens as childcare.

Through my engagement as a youth sports volunteer, mentor, and high school coach, I have observed how easily attachment to their devices fades for young people when they are engaged physically, mentally, and socially in real life. I have heard my players express relief to be detached from their phones. The more we can offer our young people opportunities to engage without depending on their devices, the better!

HB1278 is a smart prevention strategy. It links potential social media litigation revenue to long-term youth well-being, ensures funds are supplemental, and prioritizes meaningful youth engagement in program design.

As a youth sports advocate, I strongly support policies that invest upstream in prevention rather than downstream in crisis response. HB1278 does precisely that.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge a favorable report.

Sincerely,

Alexis Seth

Sport Her Power LLC