



**Local power, collective voice  
for Maryland's children, youth and families**

March 11, 2026

**SUPPORT – HB1278 - Maryland Positive Youth Development Commission and Fund -  
Establishment**

Dear Delegates:

On behalf of the Maryland Association of Local Management Boards, I am writing in support of **HB1278 - Maryland Positive Youth Development Commission and Fund - Establishment** to establish 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.

Local Management Boards in each county and jurisdiction in the State of Maryland conduct community needs assessments and address the needs of children and families in their respective jurisdiction. We work closely with youth across systems. 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. 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.

**Nonetheless, we urge you to support HB1278 - Maryland Positive Youth Development Commission and Fund - Establishment** to create the Positive Youth Development Fund.

Sincerely,

Pamela M. Brown, PhD  
Legislative Chair  
Maryland Association of Local Management Boards