



**Testimony in SUPPORT of  
House Bill 1278: Maryland Positive Youth Development Commission and Fund – Establishment**

**House Ways and Means Committee**

**Position: Favorable**

March 11, 2026

At Strong Schools Maryland, we work to support the faithful implementation and full funding of the promises legislated through the Blueprint for Maryland's Future. The Blueprint envisions a public education system where all students can feel safe, supported, and prepared to succeed in school and beyond. For this reason, Strong Schools Maryland offers favorable testimony in support of HB1278 – Maryland Positive Youth Development Commission and Fund – Establishment.

HB1278 establishes the Maryland Positive Youth Development Commission and a dedicated Positive Youth Development Fund to support community-based programs that serve youth from birth through young adulthood. Programs such as mentoring, afterschool activities, and summer learning opportunities provide young people with safe environments, supportive relationships, and opportunities to build important life skills.

Access to these programs remains uneven across Maryland, particularly in communities that face greater economic barriers. When young people do not have access to structured activities outside of school hours, families often struggle to find safe and enriching environments for their children. Investing in youth development programs helps strengthen protective factors that support students' academic success, mental well-being, and long-term stability.

HB1278 represents an important investment in prevention and youth opportunity. By supporting community-based programs, the bill strengthens the broader network of supports that help students succeed both in school and in their communities.

**For these reasons, Strong Schools Maryland urges the House Ways and Means Committee to issue a favorable report on HB1278.**

**Please contact Kenzie Funk at [kenzie@strongschoolsmaryland.org](mailto:kenzie@strongschoolsmaryland.org) for additional questions.**