



MEMORANDUM

TO: The Honorable Jheanelle Wilkins, Chair
and Members of the House Ways and Means Committee

FROM: Samira Jackson, Manis, Canning & Associates
Representing The Boys & Girls Clubs of Maryland Alliance

Mark Piccirilli, State Director
The Boys & Girls Clubs of Maryland Alliance

DATE: March 11, 2026

**RE: HB 1278 - Maryland Positive Youth Development Commission and Fund -
Establishment**

POSITION: SUPPORT

The Boys & Girls Clubs of Maryland **SUPPORT House Bill 1278**. This bill establishes a Commission and funding mechanism to support youth-serving organizations across Maryland that provide structured programming, mentoring, and safe spaces for young people. The bill also ensures that statewide youth-serving organizations are represented in the program's governance structure so that implementation reflects the needs of communities across Maryland.

Investments in youth-serving organizations are essential to ensuring Maryland's young people have access to safe environments, strong mentors, and the opportunities they need to succeed. Programs that provide structured out-of-school time activities, academic support, and positive adult relationships play a critical role in supporting youth well-being, improving educational outcomes, and strengthening communities across the state.

Organizations such as Boys & Girls Clubs help demonstrate the impact these programs can have. Boys & Girls Clubs across Maryland currently serve more than 30,000 youth each year through nearly 90 Club sites located in communities across the state. Clubs provide structured academic programming, mentoring relationships, workforce readiness opportunities, and health and wellness activities that support the whole child. These programs help address some of the most pressing challenges facing Maryland's youth, including chronic absenteeism, youth mental health concerns, and the need for safe and supportive environments outside of the school day.

The programs supported through HB 1278 would strengthen the capacity of youth-serving organizations across Maryland to expand services and reach more young people who need support. Additional resources allow organizations to hire and retain staff, expand programming, and open doors to youth who may currently be on waiting lists for services. These investments support academic success, career readiness, and positive youth development while also helping to prevent youth involvement in violence and other negative outcomes. Organizations like the Boys & Girls Clubs of Maryland demonstrate the positive impact youth-serving programs can have. Among Club members who attend regularly, **97% graduate from high school on time**, one powerful example of the outcomes that strong youth programming can produce.

For these reasons, the Boys & Girls Clubs of Maryland **SUPPORT HB 1278** and respectfully request a **FAVORABLE** Committee report.