



Testimony in Support of House Bill 694

Governor's Office for Children - Engaging Neighborhoods, Organizations, Unions, Governments, and Households (ENOUGH) Grant Program (ENOUGH Act of 2024)

To: Chair Ben Barnes and Members of the Appropriations Committee
From: Demaune A. Millard, President & CEO, Family League of Baltimore
Date: February 28, 2024

Family League of Baltimore (Family League) supports House Bill 694 as it possesses an intentional focus on building the intersection between community impact and reducing child poverty by addressing systemic barriers. HB 694 creates an additional opportunity for human capital investment in support of improving outcomes for children and families, while laying the foundation to meet the critical gaps in infrastructure at the community level. If passed, this bill will also harness the power of community impact from early childcare and education to affordable housing, and public safety.

As the LMB (Local Management Board) for the City of Baltimore, our bold goal is to be powered by and in partnership with community, we will address inequities in education, health, and economic opportunity through an anti-racist lens to ensure that positive outcomes can be a reality for all Baltimoreans. To ensure the sustainability of programs in impacted communities, adequate funding is crucial. This funding represents a direct investment in communities experiencing multi-generational poverty and its repercussions. In collaboration with Morgan State University's School of Community Health and Policy, a Community Health Needs Assessment in 2019, that studied the issues of the community through a health equity lens. This research revealed that childhood poverty rates in Baltimore had been stable at 33%, though there had been a slightly positive trend over the last three years prior.

Below is a representation of the communities in Baltimore Children living below poverty:ⁱ



Continuous investment in these communities through programs provides residents with opportunities to overcome barriers and challenges they would otherwise face. The ENOUGH Act supports cradle-to-career investments in youth and families, a strategy the State would benefit from.

As the designated Local Management Board for the City of Baltimore, Family League works collaboratively to support data-informed, community-driven solutions to align resources to dismantle systemic barriers that limit the possibilities for children, families, and communities. Our policy focus is also guided by and in support of the Governor’s Office of Children Results for Child Well-Being. Through our strategic planning process, we have prioritized three of these results areas, focusing on the success of Baltimore’s children in school; the economic stability of families; and the safety of communities for children, youth, and families. We support HB694 in particular because of its alignment with the result areas that work to ensure “Families are Safe and Economically Stable.”

For more information contact Keontae Kells, Executive Administrator kkells@familyleague.org

ⁱ Description: This indicator measures the percentage of persons under the age of 18 living in households where the total income fell below the poverty threshold out of all children in households in an area. Federal and state governments use such estimates to allocate funds to local communities. Local communities use these estimates to identify the number of individuals or families eligible for various programs. Community Health Needs Assessment – Morgan State University & Family League of Baltimore