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**Written Testimony Submitted for the Record to the  
Maryland House of Delegates  
Ways and Means Committee  
For the Hearing on  
Public Schools – Agricultural Education Programs  
(HB 870)  
February 16, 2018  
SUPPORT**

Maryland PTA represents thousands of volunteer members and families in 900 public schools. For nearly 103 years, our mission has been to make every child's potential a reality by engaging and empowering families and communities to advocate for all children. Maryland PTA is comprised of families, students, teachers, administrators, and business as well as community leaders devoted to the educational success of children and family engagement in Maryland. As the state's oldest and largest child advocacy organization, Maryland PTA is a powerful voice for all children, a relevant resource for families, schools and communities and a strong advocate for public education.

**Maryland PTA submits this testimony in support of House Bill 870, Education - Public Schools – Agricultural Education Programs.** This bill encourages each local board of education to implement an agricultural education program that prepares students for successful careers and a lifetime of informed choices related to global agriculture, food, fiber and natural resources. This bill also boosts the establishment of agricultural education programs that prepares students for a wide range of opportunities in agriculture-related employment and higher education by providing instruction and developing skills in science, math, technology, communications, leadership, and management through integrated classroom and laboratory instruction, supervised agricultural experiences, and leadership experiences and involvement in student organizations.

This bill builds on legislation passed in previous years relating to agriculture science curriculum. Maryland PTA supports this bill because it places an increased emphasis on the teaching of science, mathematics, and technology to assure that all youth acquire the knowledge and skills needed to succeed in a global economy. The implementation of viable and promising agricultural education programs can lead to increased post-secondary studies in agricultural science. Popular career options from obtaining a bachelor's degree in agricultural science include opportunities in the fields of scientific research and agribusiness such as a food scientist, agricultural analyst, conservationist and community planning consultant.

Because this bill brings structure to a relevant and valuable curriculum, it improves the possibility of establishing agricultural magnet schools such as the one at North Harford High School in Harford County or even elective course work that specializes in agricultural science. Maryland PTA believes that every child must be provided with a well-rounded, high-quality education which will ensure that all children have the opportunity to reach their full potential and become productive members of society. House Bill 870 contributes to this effort.

It is for these reasons above that Maryland PTA urges a favorable vote to SUPPORT House Bill 870.

Testimony is presented on the behalf of

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