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**Written Testimony Submitted for the Record to the
Maryland Senate
Budget and Taxation Committee
For the Hearing on
Education - Head Start Program - Annual Appropriation
(SB 373)
February 7, 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 Senate Bill 373 – Education – Head Start Program – Annual Appropriation. This bill requires an annual appropriation of at least \$3.0 million in the State budget for the Head Start Program.

The Head Start Program is administered by the Office of Head Start, within the Administration for Children and Families, of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. It was established in 1965 to promote school readiness for children in low-income families by offering educational, nutritional, health, social, and other services. In 2016, Head Start was funded to serve nearly one million children and pregnant women in centers, family homes, and in family child care homes in urban, suburban, and rural communities throughout the nation.

In the spring of 1995, a partnership between National PTA and the National Head Start Association was launched because of the common belief that there was a need to educate early learners and advocate to improve affordability, accessibility, coordination and family engagement in high-quality early education programs. Accordingly, Maryland PTA believes that the Head Start Program helps children and families bridge the gap between learning environments and creates opportunities for parents and other caregivers to become more involved in their children's education. Undoubtedly, Maryland PTA supports this bill's recommended state supplement of \$3,000,000 annually in the state budget.

In alignment with the Maryland State Department of Education, Maryland PTA believes that a restoration of funding of \$1.2 million in the state budget will reduce the summer learning loss and increase school readiness skills, including social and emotional skills. Because early learning is associated with positive outcomes such as increased graduation rates, higher education attainment and lower incarceration, Maryland PTA encourages your vote to support Senate Bill 373.

Testimony is presented on the behalf of

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