



January 24, 2021

Testimony of Laura Hale
American Heart Association
Support of SB 172 Maryland Health Equity Resource Act

Dear Chair Guzzone, Vice Chair Rosapepe, and Honorable Members of the Budget and Tax Committee and Finance Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony. My name is Laura Hale and I am the Director of Government Relations for the American Heart Association. The American Heart Association offers our support of this legislation.

SB 172 takes key steps to create investments in communities that have been historically underinvested in. Due to systemic and structural racism, communities of color have been disinvested in as well as strategically be placed at a disadvantage. These actions have shorten the lives of African Americans and has decrease their access to healthcare, healthy food, and other essentials for longer lives. It is essential that Maryland takes steps to invests in these communities and bring about equity. The focus on communities of color is essential as we take steps as a state to overcome systemic racism which is a public health crisis¹. SB 172 does just that by placing healthcare investment into key communities in the state.

Healthcare is only one step in addressing health equity. The state must continue to make investments such as funding the Maryland Money Market program and Complete Streets.

The American Heart Association urges a favorable report on SB 172.

¹ <https://www.ahajournals.org/doi/10.1161/CIR.0000000000000936>