



Spoken Testimony on HB 1031

March 10, 2020

Gregg Mitchell, Chief Advancement Officer

Gregg

- Thank you for inviting us here today to urge a favorable report on House Bill 1031.
- As you may know, Habitat for Humanity was founded more than 40 years ago with the vision of bringing people together to build homes, communities and hope
- Since then, the Habitat model has spread across the globe
- Today, there are more than 1,300 affiliates in more than 70 countries
- Each affiliate operates independently and strives to meet the unique needs of its community
- Here in Central Maryland, those needs include:
 - Providing a path to affordable homeownership in a region with a high cost of living
 - Extending the dream of homeownership to families who might previously have been denied access to it
 - Addressing the need for training and well-paying jobs through our HabiCorps workforce development program

- Providing low-cost building supplies, appliances, furniture and other household goods through our 6 ReStores
- And, revitalizing neighborhoods that have experienced decades of disinvestment .

- However, we cannot work as a committed partner in addressing the issue of homelessness without good data and reporting from supporting government agencies. Good data is crucial to our assessing the numbers of homeless persons and at what inflection points people are most vulnerable.
- Data is an important element in helping us to fulfill our mission as it informs good policy and dedication of resources.
- The reporting data from this bill will help us in all aspects of our work in the communities we serve.
- As part of the broader scope approach we have recently expanded into job training with our HabiCorps which teaches crucial construction skills to trainees and help them find good paying jobs which includes formerly incarcerated persons.
- Habitat Chesapeake to date, has built 770 beautiful, affordable homes
- We have helped 2,700 children and family members find safety and stability
- We have transformed 18 communities, replacing vacant and abandoned buildings with visible investment
- None of this work would be possible without a wide range of public and

private partners who provide context for our work and with our partners providing data and input to guide our work and help to measure our impact long-term

- We believe deeply in the value of homeownership and in our mission but We also believe that Habitat cannot solve the housing affordability crisis alone
- The need is overwhelming and so there needs to be a continuum of housing options to serve the wide range of individuals in need
- Among those most in need are:
 - Currently homeless individuals
 - Formerly incarcerated, returning individuals
 - First-time homebuyers
 - Seniors who are challenged to age in place
- A wide range of data is needed to craft an informed, comprehensive continuum approach to serving housing-insecure populations.
- We wholeheartedly endorse House Bill 1031 to ensure that the Joint Committee on Ending Homelessness has all possible information at their disposal.
- Thank you for your time and concern for this important issue.