

**HB 791- Housing Opportunities Commission- Procurement**  
**Tuesday, March 10, 2020**  
**Environment and Transportation Committee**  
**Favorable**

TO: Hon. Kumar Barve, Chair and members of the Environment and  
Transportation Committee  
From: Gino Renne, UFCW Local 1994 MCGEO

Good afternoon Chairman Barve and members of the Environment and Transportation Committee,

We submit this testimony on behalf of the 8,000 members--including 200 employees of the Housing Opportunities Commission that we represent.

HB791 Housing Opportunities Commission- Procurement would require the Commission to approve contracts exceeding \$150,000 in advance in an open meeting for purchases not regulated by the federal procurement regulations

In an emergency situation, the executive director may award a contract exceeding \$150,000, if the contract is brought before the Commission for review at the next meeting.

Public accountability and avoiding the appearance of impropriety is paramount to maintaining the public trust. Requiring large expenditures to be made in public open meetings keeps the Commission accountable to the public that they serve.

This legislation protects the public funding that low- and moderate-income Montgomery County residents depend on to meet basic housing needs, while providing the appropriate balance between the flexibility the Commission has requested and public accountability. On behalf of the members of UFCW Local 1994 MCGEO, we ask for a **favorable** report.