



Statement of Maryland Rural Health Association

To the Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee

February 9, 2021

Senate Bill 117 Workgroup on Minority Homeownership, Neighborhood Revitalization, and Household Wealth Equity

POSITION: SUPPORT

Chair Pinsky, Vice Chair Kagan, Senator Sydnor, and members of the Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee, the Maryland Rural Health Association (MRHA) is in SUPPORT of Senate Bill 117 Workgroup on Minority Homeownership, Neighborhood Revitalization, and Household Wealth Equity.

MRHA supports this legislation that will inform on the creation of wealth-building opportunities for minority households and promote community revitalization through targeted investments in homeownership.

Rural communities suffer from lack of economic development, infrastructure investment, and structural health inequities. This bill would provide data driven solutions to provide quality housing, and community and economy development that will lead to better health outcomes for these communities.

MRHA's mission is to educate and advocate for the optimal health and wellness of rural communities and their residents. Membership is comprised of health departments, hospitals, community health centers, health professionals, and community members in rural Maryland.

Rural Maryland represents almost 80 percent of Maryland's land area and 25% of its population. Of Maryland's 24 counties, 18 are considered rural by the state, and with a population of over 1.6 million they differ greatly from the urban areas in the state.

And while Maryland is one of the richest states, there is great disparity in how wealth is distributed. The greatest portion of wealth resides around the Baltimore/Washington Region; while further away from the I-95 corridor, differences in the social and economic environment are very apparent.

MHRA believes this legislation is important to support our rural communities and we thank you for your consideration.

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