

Distinguished State Legislators: Good afternoon.

My name is Rhonda Pindell-Charles. I serve on the Annapolis City Council, representing Ward 3. And I am an attorney.

I have lived in Annapolis—specifically, the Parole community—all of my 67 years. And my family has had a presence here in Parole since the Civil War.

I am here to testify in support of SB310/HB386.

As you may be aware, on September 1, 2021, our community suffered a devastating event—namely, Tornado Ida ripped through our neighborhoods. While, as a result, we were blessed not to have suffered any loss of life or injuries, nevertheless, nothing of this magnitude has ever happened here. So, for us, it has been a traumatic event with unimaginable experiences, including “navigating the systems”, especially since, again, our Parole community is an older community.

Not only have close to 100 private households been directly affected suffering a variety of losses, approximately 30 businesses, including non-profits, have been affected as well: Anywhere from being a total loss, to the loss of electricity, and everything else in between—directly affecting their ability to do business and to stay in business. And we are still reeling from this event.

While we remain very grateful for the support of our City, County, State, the Governor’s Office, and private organizations, nevertheless, a more streamlined process would have been very helpful. And this Bill addresses many challenges.

SB310/HB386 would authorize local fund managers to distribute funds after local emergencies, rather than only under State emergencies as they are currently authorized. This would lead to less bureaucracy, and dollars would reach the hands of businesses and non-profits more quickly.

Therefore, WE wholeheartedly support this legislation.

Thank you very much for your thoughtful consideration.

2/9/22