

**TESTIMONY OF EDESEL M. BROWN JR.
SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE
SUPPORTING SENATE BILL 252**

Tuesday, January 31, 2023
1pm

Good afternoon, Chairwoman Griffith, and members of the Finance Committee. My name is Edsel M. Brown Jr., I live in Lusby, Maryland, and I am the Chairman of the Southern Maryland Minority Chamber of Commerce.

I fully support Senate Bill 252.

I have extensive experience working with, supporting, and providing guidance to Minority Business Enterprises here in Maryland and across the country. In addition to currently serving as the Chair of the Southern Maryland Minority Chamber of Commerce, I have served as an Assistant Administrator of the U.S. Small Business Administration's 8(a) program, Chair of Economic Development for the Maryland State NAACP, as well as a DC based Attorney and Accredited Small Business Consultant. In my experiences in the public, private, and nonprofit arenas, there is one common theme, Minority Businesses are always in a "catch up mode" with majority businesses. Access to capital is the cornerstone resource needed to move a business forward and Minority Businesses lag far behind majority businesses in being able to secure it. State based procurement contracts require contractors to have a solid financial footing and the ability to stretch capital resources in the performance on a contract and the downtime in being paid for that performance. Assistance and bridges must be secured to move these businesses ever forward. We must not lose sight of the fact that small businesses are the engine of the economy and as our small businesses grow, so does the State Economy. This Minority Business Enterprise Procurement Financing Program will go a long way in increasing the ability of the State's Minority Businesses to enter into and complete performance on awards with the increased access to loans and grants.

On behalf of the Southern Maryland Minority Chamber of Commerce, I urge you to vote in favor of Senate Bill 252

Thank you, Finance Committee, for the opportunity to speak and offer to answer questions you may have.