



Neighborhood Housing Services of Baltimore, Inc.

February 23, 2024

Delegate Ben Barnes, Chair
House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: House Bill 1224

Honorable Chair Barnes and Members of the Appropriations Committee:

I am the Chief Executive Officer of Neighborhood Housing Services of Baltimore (NHS). Our organization believes that economic and social justice are a right for all residents and communities. We promote this belief by removing barriers of access to homeownership, helping resident access resources to maintain their homes, and supporting communities historically impacted by systemic disinvestment.

Establishing a funding source for the community development fund is critically important as we look to invest in Maryland. There are several significant investments in the proposed budget to support community development across the state. Unfortunately, there are not corresponding operating funds to enable organizations to deploy the capital. The result is that smaller non-profit organizations are not able to access and deploy these funds. This disproportionately impacts historically disinvested communities of color across Maryland. Providing \$5 million of annual funding to the Community Development Fund will provide the resources needed for smaller organizations to be able to deploy available capital. This will help create more equity to support communities.

We ask that the committee provide a *favorable* report on HB1224

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D. T. Ellis", is written over a light blue background.

Daniel T. Ellis
Chief Executive Officer



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