

February 6, 2024

To Whom It May Concern:

I am a social worker who has lived in Baltimore City for the past seven years. In both my work and my personal life, I have observed the tremendous inequality that plagues our city. **I believe that ameliorating this inequality is a necessary step towards improving social outcomes for our city, and I believe that worker cooperatives are an excellent strategy for building wealth and autonomy; therefore, I support SB 85.**

My family of origin was and is well-resourced, and I have a tremendous amount of class privilege. I have access to inherited wealth, and am actively working to redistribute this wealth in alignment with my values of equity, anti-oppression, and justice. I have had the opportunity through this work to learn about the solidarity economy, which is an avenue for those with access to wealth to provide resources and funding to various community-based efforts to democratize wealth-building, including community development financial institutions (CDFIs), loan funds, and worker cooperatives.

I am so excited that the With Us for Us Community Wealth Building Coalition (WUFU) has taken root in Baltimore City. The WUFU coalition aims to bring together grassroots community leaders that are committed to organizing for equitable development, holding anchor institutions accountable to investing in the community, and racial justice. **SB 85 would expedite their work and strengthen their efforts to decrease wealth disparity in our city.** Worker cooperatives provide opportunities for self-determination, community autonomy, and building wealth collectively. This is a critical need in Baltimore city, where segregation and poverty continue to impact communities.

For the reasons stated above, I urge a favorable report on SB 85.

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