

**Testimony HB 472 –
Housing – Community Development Fund Program Act Funding
February 11, 2019
Position: FAVORABLE**

Dear Chairman Barve and the Members of the House Environment & Transportation:

We urge this committee to vote a favorable report for HB 472 – Housing – Community Development Fund Program Act - Funding HB 472 creates a permanent funding source for the Community Development Fund which was created during the 2018 legislative session. The funding will be critical operating dollars to use for community development organizations to apply for affordable housing, neighborhood and commercial revitalization, housing and financial counseling, small business development, community services, and more. The funding source is \$5 million from surplus of the Unclaimed Property Fund.

Habitat for Humanity of the Chesapeake is the leading provider of affordable homeownership opportunities in Baltimore City. Since our founding 37 years ago, we have built or renovated more than 760 homes in 18 communities across Baltimore City and Baltimore, Anne Arundel and Howard counties – helping 2,700 children and family members find safety and stability. This year alone, we will work in 6 communities, building 25+ homes that include both new construction and intensive rehabilitation of long-vacant homes.

Homebuilding requires millions of dollars in capital funds, but an even greater need for our organization is operating support to keep our lights on and staff out in the field with partner families and community stakeholders. Habitat Chesapeake is unique in that beyond building homes, we build cohorts of strong, self-reliant homeowners via financial literacy and home maintenance classes and ongoing financial goal coaching. We build strong communities through programming with anchor institutions, fellow nonprofits, and current residents. And, we build a skilled workforce with our HabiCorps Workforce Development Program, which offers meaningful, hands-on training in carpentry, construction management and property management for low-income individuals. All of these high-impact programs require operating support.

Thanks to our long history of transforming lives – more than 2,700 to date - and communities – including Patterson Park (90+ Habitat families), Pigtown (40+ Habitat families) and Waverly (70+ Habitat families) - we are asked to do more every year. A permanent Community Development Fund will sustain our current efforts and offer a foundation for future expansion to serve even more families and communities in need.

Please vote a favorable report for HB 472

Respectfully Submitted: Mike Posko, CEO