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*The Maryland House of Delegates*  
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**Testimony of Delegate Dana Stein in Support of House Bill 1099**

Chairman Barve and members of the Environment and Transportation Committee:

This bill makes several changes to the Maryland Mortgage Program (MMP), to give people receiving loan assistance a greater chance of success in homeownership.

The MMP provides 30-year fixed-rate home loans to eligible homebuyers purchasing in Maryland. MMP provides a range of financial incentives and other assistance that, for many homebuyers, means the difference between being able to purchase and continuing to rent.

But as you will hear, community-based organizations are concerned about the number of clients they are seeing with unsustainable mortgages and its impact on communities. Housing counseling before signing a contract would help with this situation, and is much more useful than after signing a contract.

Under the bill, MMP loan recipients must take a home buyer education program by a HUD-approved housing counseling agency or HUD-approved product either in-person or on-line prior to signing a contract of sale for a property.

Also, the loan recipient must receive one-on-one counseling for at least an hour with a HUD-approved housing counseling agency, prior to signing the contract of sale.

The bill also requires the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) to submit an annual report on several items relating to the MMP program, including number of loan recipients, income range of recipients, and other data.

The data collection component of the bill is intended to help housing counseling organizations to fully know the local impact of their work and determine the program's efficacy.

For all of these reasons, I urge approval of House Bill 1099.