



Maryland Works, Inc.

State Finance and Procurement – Procedures

**Written Testimony of Robert L. Hofmann, President, Maryland Works, Inc.
Presented to the House Health and Government Operations Committee
February 25, 2020**

Good afternoon Madam Chair and members of the House Health and Government Operations Committee. My name is Bob Hofmann. I serve as president of Maryland Works, a statewide membership association dedicated to expanding employment and business ownership opportunities for people with disabilities/other barriers to employment. I am here today in support of HB649. We are drafting a couple of clarifying amendments to strengthen the bill and will work with the Department of General Services in that process.

Among our other activities, Maryland Works serves as the state-appointed coordinating entity (CE) for the Employment Works Program (EWP), one of Maryland's socioeconomic preferences in state procurement. In that role, we help nonprofit community service providers to secure state procurements which they utilize in providing skills training and employment experience for Marylanders with disabilities. We also help entrepreneurs with disabilities to gain experience and business growth opportunities through state procurements and procurements of state-aided or controlled entities.

Passage of HB649 will advance Maryland's efforts to refine and strengthen its procurement system. Among other things, the bill would consolidate pricing authority for the Maryland Correctional Enterprises (MCE) under the same pricing and selection committee that was originally formed to set prices for the Maryland Employment Works Program (EWP). You might recall that, a couple years ago, pricing authority for Blind Industries and Services of Maryland (BISM) was added under the same committee. While we have some concerns about this consolidation, we believe that the streamlining of what otherwise constituted three separate committees undertaking the same or similar work makes sense. In short, the move to consolidate the separate committees represents "good government" practices.

The amendments we are working on would simplify the name of the new combined committee, clarify the relationships and responsibilities of the three preferred procurement programs in relation to the Pricing and Selection Committee, and clarify the applicability of each of the procurement preferences. We look forward to presenting the amendments to the relevant sub-committee and to their being considered by the full committee.

On behalf of our entire organization, we thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today and urge your favorable report on HB649 with amendments.

Thank you.