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Parts of Peace  
Executive Director

Date of Testimony : January 14, 2021

House Bill 307 - Maryland Technology Internship Program      Stance: Support

To whom it may concern,

I would like to testify in support of House Bill 307 - Maryland Technology Internship Program. As the Executive Director of Parts of Peace, a nonprofit committed to providing access to resources for vulnerable families; I see interns as truly valuable assets in the workplace. As a start-up organization with a limited budget, we rely heavily on skilled volunteers and college interns to provide services to an average of 112 households each month.

We have been blessed to have worked with interns that have a passion for social justice and a commitment to making Baltimore a city in which all families have the resources they need to thrive. Last year our organization was privileged to have been contacted by two undergraduate students seeking an internship experience with our organization. At the time we did not have a formal internship program but were willing to give them a try. Our interns provided input and supported the development of our Strategic Plan, offering insight into their own experiences and ideas for service delivery. Curious and open-minded, they presented fresh and innovative solutions to pressing social issues faced by low-income families in Baltimore. From client intake, to data entry for inventory to case management; our interns have supported our work in many ways.

As an organization, we also worked to contribute as much to our interns as they did our organization. From one-on-one professional mentoring, support with cover letters and resumes, networking with industry colleagues and attendance at local industry conferences, our interns were able to gain professional development and real world experience.

An addition to having the privilege of working with such amazing interns in the last year, I often reflect on how my own personal experiences as an intern have lead me to start a nonprofit organization that provides support services to vulnerable families that are otherwise without critical basic necessities. The internships that I participated in gave me the skills, confidence, knowledge and support needed to develop into a competent nonprofit professional and social innovator.

Internships give promising college students an opportunity to explore, to learn, to grow and most importantly; to challenge themselves. The next generation of professionals yearn to contribute their unique gifts, ideas, skills and insights; the Maryland Technology Internship Program ensures that the next generation has the opportunity to do so.

**Yours Sincerely,**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "M. Bonkowski". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "M" and a stylized "B".

**Mariah Pratt Bonkowski**

**Executive Director**