



House Bill 1211
Pre-Seed Builder Fund
Finance Committee
SUPPORT

March 23, 2021

To Chair Kelley and Esteemed Members of the Ways & Means Committee:

On behalf of Strong Future Maryland, we write in support of House Bill 1211. Strong Future Maryland works to advance bold, progressive policy changes to address systemic inequality and promote a sustainable, just and prosperous economic future for all Marylanders.

The Racial & Economic Justice Agenda proposed by Speaker Jones seeks to address many of the factors exacerbating the racial wealth gap. Black families, on average, possess just 5% of the wealth of a white family in America. One of the many facets that the Agenda focuses on is the role of entrepreneurship in wealth building. Black entrepreneurs face additional barriers that their white counterparts do not, including access to capital, resources, and networks. In 2018, only 5% of U.S. Small Business Administration's loan guarantee program went to Black-owned businesses. Black entrepreneurs are less likely to access financial support from friends and family and are underrepresented in venture capital and equity markets.

The Maryland Technology Development Corporation (TEDCO) was created to address many of the challenges related to funding, resources, and networks. The creation of a Pre-Seed Builder Fund that HB1211 calls for would provide critical resources to help fight these disparities. This Fund would help diversity the ecosystem of start-up companies in Maryland and make our economy more resilient.

We respectfully urge a favorable report.

On behalf of Strong Future Maryland,

John B. King

Alice Wilkerson

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