



HB 41- Maryland State Bank Task Force

March 19, 2021

Senate Finance Committee

SUPPORT

Chairwoman Kelley, Vice-Chair and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of House Bill 41. This bill will establish a Maryland State Bank Task Force to review and evaluate the creation of a Maryland State Bank.

The CASH Campaign of Maryland promotes economic advancement for low-to-moderate income individuals and families in Baltimore and across Maryland. CASH accomplishes its mission through operating a portfolio of direct service programs, building organizational and field capacity, and leading policy and advocacy initiatives to strengthen family economic stability. CASH and its partners across the state achieve this by providing free tax preparation services through the IRS program 'VITA', offering free financial education and coaching, and engaging in policy research and advocacy. **Almost 4,000 of CASH's tax preparation clients earn less than \$10,000 annually. More than half earn less than \$20,000.**

HB 41 is a chance to examine how a state bank could provide necessary opportunities for Maryland. Currently, North Dakota is the only state that has their own public bank. It serves to progress priorities and uplift local communities. A state bank will help drive economic development across all regions of Maryland.

A state public bank can support small businesses by providing them a safe way to access loans. This will contribute to revitalizing and maintaining small businesses which are important to have strong communities. Access to safe loans can also encourage entrepreneurship which will bring new and important services to local communities.

A Maryland state bank would have the ability to provide more support to our local economy during times of economic hardships. This is especially relevant to the conversation today as COVID-19 has caused significant damage to local economies across Maryland. This damage leads to high unemployment rates, business closures, and resources leaving communities.

HB 41 is an opportunity to research how a state bank can be implemented to respond to state needs. This could include infrastructure projects, access to safe banking, and other state priorities.

For these reasons, we encourage you to return a favorable report on HB 41.