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Anne Arundel County

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Testimony of the NAACP Anne Arundel County Branch

Claudia Barber, 1st Vice President

Health and Government Operations Committee

HB1276 Maryland Emergency Management Agency – Emergency Planning and Management

Cultural Competency – Study

March 10, 2021 at 1:30 pm

Good afternoon Chairman Shane Pendergrass and Vice Chair Jocelyn Pena Melnyk. My name is Claudia Barber, and I am the first vice president of the Anne Arundel County NAACP and speaking on behalf of President Jacqueline Allsup.

The Anne Arundel County NAACP wholeheartedly supports House Bill 1276.

The bill authorizes the Maryland Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) to study and make recommendations on best practices and create model policies for emergency responders to follow in handling culturally sensitive minority communities in emergency management planning and practices. We ask that you **issue a favorable report on this bill.**

The bill also includes having MEMA conduct a survey of State and local government organizations for emergency management to ascertain current emergency planning strategies that address the needs of diverse communities, including: (i) individuals with disabilities; (ii) African American, Latino, Indigenous, and other minority communities.

We also applaud the bill's further mention of recommendations for model policies for individuals with limited English proficiency; individuals facing socioeconomic challenges; and individuals with religious restrictions.

Finally, we endorse the requirement to review federal emergency management plans and the emergency management plans of other states that address the needs of diverse communities.

Please vote YES for House Bill 1276. Thank you.

NAACP

Anne Arundel Branch

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