

### **M. Bond Written Testimony- House Appropriations Committee - 2/8/22**

Being a transplant from the Bronx, New York I decided to apply to Baltimore Corps for financial stability and access to healthcare. In 2017, I had just graduated from Loyola University Maryland and was having a hard time getting entry level positions I was qualified for. I was encouraged by previous Baltimore Corps alumni and grant awardees that organizations like Baltimore Corps provide the kind of opportunity that I was looking for.

During my fellowship with the Baltimore Police Department Consent Decree Implementation Unit, I was able to receive a higher paying entry level job than those I was applying for in the communications field at the time in addition to health benefits. I was able to get on my feet and start to make my own roots in the city I've come to love.

I have since worked with the Mayor's Office of Neighborhood Safety and Engagement utilizing my communications degree in addition to my community engagement skills because of the connection I've grown with the city and community here.

Service provided me with an entirely new perspective on how I can live my life. I am even more devoted than ever to creating more equitable outcomes for historically underserved communities not just in Baltimore but throughout the entire state of Maryland.

Maryland Corps HB0443 would not only provide an opportunity for transplants like myself to contribute to bettering the Maryland community but provide broader access to wrap around services like mental health care that are especially critical now more than ever. I urge the committee to pass this bill to build a better future for our state.