

# **SB0557 Sen Sydnor Redevelopment Authority Testimon**

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Position: FAV

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THE SENATE OF MARYLAND  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

**Testimony Regarding SB 557:  
Baltimore County – West Baltimore County Redevelopment Authority  
Before the Finance Committee  
March 15, 2022**

*“Revitalization (noun) – the process of making something grow, develop, or become successful again”  
Cambridge Business English Dictionary, Cambridge University Press*

Good afternoon Chair Kelley, members of the Finance Committee.

If Baltimore County residents are to continue to enjoy a high quality of life, the County must be successful in its efforts to redevelop mature, older communities and local business districts. To spur investments into these communities the federal, state and local governments have created various programs /designations for which communities could qualify and be designated. These include, but are not limited to the Federal government’s HubZone program<sup>1</sup> and Opportunity Zones<sup>2</sup>, the State’s Sustainable Communities program<sup>3</sup> and the County’s Commercial Revitalization Program.<sup>4</sup> Over the years “West Baltimore County”<sup>5</sup> has had some areas qualify and been designated as HubZones, Opportunity Zones, Sustainable Communities, and Commercial Revitalization zones.<sup>6</sup> Despite these designations, over the years, the County has not focused its resources in a manner to spur investment in West Baltimore County and has largely left these communities without the type of quality investment they deserve.

Significant revitalization and redevelopment projects that have a successful result are generally driven by the private and public sectors working together with a unified vision for future economic

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<sup>1</sup> The Federal HubZone Program – provided certification for preferred access to federal contracts to fuel the growth of small businesses in historically underutilized business zones.

<sup>2</sup> Opportunity Zones are designed to drive long-term capital into low-income communities across the nation, using tax incentives to encourage private investment into designated census tracts through privately- or publicly-managed investment funds.

<sup>3</sup> The Sustainable Communities program – designed to encourage interagency and cross-governmental collaboration for financing programs and tax credit incentives

<sup>4</sup> Woodlawn Commercial Revitalization – established a business investment area to offer a mix of office and light industrial space to support the Baltimore Washington Corridor and other federal facilities.

<sup>5</sup> Under this legislation, “West Baltimore County” as defined as “the geographic area of Baltimore County within the boundary line of Liberty Road to the north, Baltimore National Pike to the south, Rolling Road to the west, and the line between Baltimore County and Baltimore City to the east along with all contiguous parcels for one block, except at the boundary line between Baltimore County and Baltimore City.”

<sup>6</sup> See Appendix which contains maps of certain designated communities within the Western Baltimore County boundaries under SB 557.

and community development. Match this with a strong determination and shared desire to bring an entire project to reality and Baltimore County will be able to be all that it should be for its residents in the West Baltimore County designated area.

Some key anchors exist but need to be brought together with other factors to attract and maintain residents and businesses. Significant employers and employment opportunities are within West Baltimore County such as the Federal Bureau of Investigation Baltimore Field Office, Social Security Administration Headquarters, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services Headquarters, and many mid-sized and small businesses. Yet some of its commercial areas are, and have been for decades, under stress through age, deterioration, blight and flight. Thus far, Baltimore County has failed to bring together the public and private actors in a manner this community deserves. SB557 permits the County to focus in a way that it never has, and that will be more beneficial to western Baltimore County specifically and Baltimore County generally.

SB 557 authorizes (1) Baltimore County to exercise powers to acquire, develop or redevelop, and dispose of certain land or property located in West Baltimore County for commercial, or industrial or residential purposes and (2) the County Executive and County Council of Baltimore County to establish, by law, the West Baltimore County Redevelopment Authority and to delegate the powers indicated in SB 557 to the Authority. SB 557, as amended, does not request eminent domain authority.

Establishment of the West Baltimore County Redevelopment Authority as outlined in SB557 will provide the necessary structure to move forward. The Authority will then have a set of tools and authorizations to help spur a strong partnership between public and private entities, federal, state and local governmental agencies and the community at large in order to engage and act on the Authority's sole mission: to bring revitalization and development to the designated area in western Baltimore County.

For the aforementioned reasons, I ask that SB 557 be reported out favorably.

**CDN SB 557 FAVORABLE.pdf**

Uploaded by: Claudia Wilson Randall

Position: FAV



**Testimony SB 557  
Finance Committee  
March 15, 2022  
Position: FAVORABLE**

Dear Chairperson Kelly and Members of the Finance Committee:

The Community Development Network of Maryland (CDN) is the voice for Maryland's community development sector and serves nearly 200 member organizations. CDN—focuses on small affordable housing developers, housing counseling agencies and community-based non-profits across the state of Maryland. The mission of CDN is to promote, strengthen and advocate for the community development sector throughout Maryland's urban, suburban and rural communities.

SB 557 Authorizes Baltimore County to exercise powers to acquire, develop or redevelop, and dispose of certain land or property located in West Baltimore County for residential, commercial, or industrial purposes; authorizing the County Executive and County Council of Baltimore County to establish, by law, the West Baltimore County Redevelopment Authority and to delegate certain powers to the Authority to acquire, develop, redevelop, or dispose of certain land or property located in West Baltimore County for certain purposes; etc.

A redevelopment authority in West Baltimore County would help to coordinate efforts to revitalize and preserve targeted communities with an emphasis on communities near and within the Beltway in support of County priorities for community development, transit-oriented development, and affordable housing.

The West Baltimore County Redevelopment Authority would have a variety of tools and funding opportunities for the betterment of the community. In other parts of the state, redevelopment authorities contribute to the creation of a diverse and vibrant economy and living environment using community building techniques and provide responsible and responsive development and redevelopment that is designed to enhance quality of life, balanced growth and job creation for diverse sustainable communities. Further, these entities decrease the number of blighted commercial and residential structures and improve the quality of life for residents.

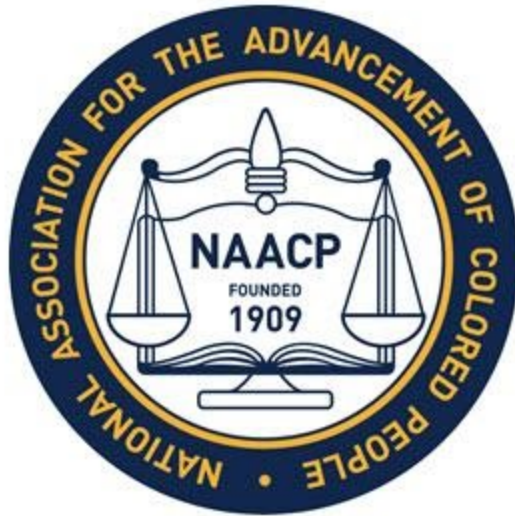
We ask that the committee issue a favorable report on SB 557.

Submitted by Claudia Wilson Randall, Executive Director, Community Development Network

# **SB0557\_RandallstownNAACP\_FAV**

Uploaded by: Matt Lewis

Position: FAV



# Randallstown

**Po Box 731 Randallstown, MD 21133**

February 8, 2022

Finance Committee  
3 East  
Miller Senate Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: SUPPORT SB 0557 Baltimore County- West Baltimore County Redevelopment Authority

Dear Chair Kelley, and Vice Chair Feldman and Members of the Finance Committee:

May it be known the mission of the Randallstown NAACP is to secure equal rights in order to eliminate race-based discrimination and ensure the health and wellbeing of all persons in Baltimore County.

Can the suburbs be saved? It's a question few politicians expected they would need to answer — until just more than a decade ago, when socioeconomic data began to show population and income declining in the suburbs surrounding major American cities.

Many of these first suburbs, built during and after World War II, now suffer from old age and neglect, with crumbling infrastructure, outdated housing and poverty on the

upswing. Woodlawn, Windsor Mill, Randallstown, Owings Mills and the Liberty Road Corridor, face city-sized challenges without the tools, political clout or other resources to easily combat them.

The West Baltimore County Redevelopment Authority will operate in situations where the private sector and/or local governments cannot effectively perform. The Authority will operate on blighted, deteriorated or abandoned properties in cooperation with the local, county, state and federal governmental organization having jurisdiction. The Authority can stimulate economic revitalization, with resultant improvements in employment, infrastructure, services, and aiding in the provision of affordable housing. This legislation would give the community real hope to revitalize Security Square Mall, bring in grocery stores and other quality stores.

**The Randallstown Branch of the NAACP urges a favorable report from the committee on SB 0557.**

*yours*

Ryan Coleman

President, Randallstown NAACP

<http://randallstownnaacp.yolasite.com>

<https://www.facebook.com/NAACPrandallstown>

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**BaltimoreCounty\_INFO\_SB0557.pdf**

Uploaded by: Joel Beller

Position: INFO



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**BILL NO.:** Senate Bill 557

**TITLE:** Baltimore County - West Baltimore County Redevelopment Authority

**SPONSOR:** Senator Sydnor

**COMMITTEE:** Finance

**POSITION:** Letter of Information

**DATE:** March 15, 2022

Senate Bill 557 – Baltimore County - West Baltimore County Redevelopment Authority would establish, outline the members of, and prescribe the powers and duties of a West Baltimore County Redevelopment Authority.

Baltimore County applauds the sponsors for shining a light on the need to invest in community and economic development on the west side of the County. Baltimore County shares the sponsors’ desire to do even more in lifting up these neighborhoods. For these reasons, this administration is prioritizing several capital investments on the west side of Baltimore County and is using American Rescue Plan funding to create a new community development organization, which will work along the Liberty Road corridor. Baltimore County believes this community development organization is the most appropriate tool for bringing together the county’s western anchor institutions, local businesses, civic organizations and government to tackle longstanding problems along the corridor.

Baltimore County further believes this community development organization can partner with existing organizations to leverage existing powers – like the Baltimore County Revenue Authority – to stimulate new investment. Baltimore County has significant reservations about some of the powers SB557 proposes and believes there needs to be a more substantive discussion about whether such tools should be provided and, if so, where they should reside.

For more information, please contact Joel Beller, Acting Director of Government Affairs at [jbeller@baltimorecountymd.gov](mailto:jbeller@baltimorecountymd.gov).