



NAACP

Maryland

STATE CONFERENCE

TESTIMONY IN FAVOR OF HOUSE BILL 709

Health Government Operations

Willie Flowers, President, NAACP Maryland State Conference

March 29, 2022

Chair Pendergrass and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify in favor of HB 709. We were excited about the anticipated passing of a bill in its completion to offer access to health coverage for small business people and non-profits.

HB 709 gives the state an opportunity to study the details of how to implement a strong policy to provide subsidies for small businesses and agencies in the community who are building from the ground up to either service to the community or to offer a product.

While there are many dynamics to owning a business or running a non-profit agency, the fact across the board is that employees need incentives to continue working and healthcare should not be a deal breaker when workers want to do something they love.

Additionally, the goal of hearing all the voices for and against this bill can make the bill stronger and even expand it to other business and non-profit agencies that may not see the value or know of the details of the bill.

One important aspect for the success of the bill is technical support, community outreach and marketing that will assure that all business owners and executive directors will have the ability to upload what is needed to make the policy work for those it was intended to service.

The NAACP applauds the sponsors of the bill for taking this step to keep the hope of providing health coverage to workers and their families that will accomplish the goal of expanding to people who were left out of the original effort to achieve empowering businesses so the subsidies provided can help them provide a service.

Finally, the workgroup is an outlet for me as a leader in the community and a community based agency head to participate in some way to make the bill a reality. I look forward to the opportunity.

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We encourage a favorable report on HB 709.

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