



## TESTIMONY FOR HB0800

### Public Safety – Emergency Management – Price Gouging Consumer Protections

**Bill Sponsor:** Delegate Queen

**Committee:** Economic Matters

**Organization Submitting:** Maryland Legislative Coalition

**Person Submitting:** Cecilia Plante, co-chair

**Position:** FAVORABLE

I am submitting this testimony in favor of HB0800 on behalf of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. The Maryland Legislative Coalition is an association of activists - individuals and grassroots groups in every district in the state. We are unpaid citizen lobbyists and our Coalition supports well over 30,000 members.

Our members applaud this bill. We are living in challenging times, with a pandemic that seems to have become entrenched in our society that has caused so many people to lose their jobs, family members, and security. We have experienced scarcity of goods and have had to get used to delays in shipping. The prices of many goods have increased due to the increase in shipping costs and the lack of raw materials.

However, there are many firms that have taken advantage of this situation to make as much profit as possible by artificially increasing the prices of their goods and services. This has caused inflation to spiral and has made many families in Maryland struggle to put food on the table and even get to work.

This bill takes aim at those companies by limiting them from raising the prices of their goods or services during a state of emergency by more than 10% of pre-emergency prices unless they can prove that the price increase is directly attributable to the additional cost imposed upon them by the supplier of those goods or services. This limitation will be in effect until 90 days after the state of emergency.

The bill allows for people who have been harmed to bring suit, which we feel is beneficial, although we would like to see penalties imposed upon the violators that cannot be passed to consumers. We recognize that this is an additional, and costly layer, so while we would like to see it, we are happy to support the bill as written.

We support this bill and recommend a **FAVORABLE** report in committee.