

Testimony in Support of SB659
21st Century Financial Systems Council – Establishment
Appropriations Committee – March 27, 2023

The Goal: The State of Maryland must have a single accounting system across all units of state government to ensure accurate and timely payment of receipts, transparency and tracking of dollars, and expedient payments to vendors, contractors, and non-profits. The system must be secure and accessible. As amended, this bill, brought in partnership with the Treasurer and Secretary of Budget and Management, creates a directive to investigate, adopt, and implement a new accounting system for the government of the state to meet our state's full array of needs and do so in a secure and transparent way.

The outcome of this new directive will be called the 21st Century Financial Systems Enterprise, and will:

- begin the process to replace outdated technology that all of Maryland's state agencies rely upon,
- determine the needs of the Comptroller's Office and partnering agencies, and finally,
- develop and oversee an implementation plan for this new system.

This bill directs the Comptroller's Office, the State Treasurer's Office, the Secretary of the Department of Budget and Management, the Secretary of the Department of Information Technology, and the Secretary of the Department of General Services to coordinate on this effort. The Comptroller's Office will produce regular reports for the Governor and General Assembly addressing the accomplishments, plans for future, and legislative proposals borne out of this effort.

The original bill text established a "council" to accomplish these goals, but – after consultation with partners – we opted to submit an amendment to reorganize the language to be a directive from the Legislature rather than creating an additional layer of bureaucracy.

Why it Matters: The State of Maryland must modernize existing technologies to effectively process the volume of financial data it is responsible for and balance our books each year. To provide streamlined customer service, timely payments, and accurate accounting, we must bring our data technologies up to date.

Maryland is one of the only states that uses a legacy enterprise system called the Financial Management Information System, or FMIS, which is comprised of accounting, budgeting, purchasing and inventory applications, and mechanisms to produce reports – including those relating to Minority Business Enterprise and Small Business Reserve funds which are of high priority to my administration. FMIS runs on outdated mainframe technology, as opposed to modern cloud computing systems that are now standard in nearly every other state. Programming on these legacy systems is done in an obsolete computer language, is extremely expensive to maintain, and does not offer the range of services and efficiencies that new systems offer.

Why you should vote for this bill: We need to begin a thoughtful but expedient process to replace the outdated FMIS system and guarantee continued service to vendors, businesses, and non-profits who rely on timely payments as well as to balance our books every year. This bill will help us to undertake that process.

I urge a favorable report on SB659.



Brooke E. Lierman
Comptroller of Maryland



HOUSE BILL 709

P1, S1

3lr2502
CF SB 659

By: **The Speaker (By Request – Office of the Comptroller)**

Introduced and read first time: February 7, 2023

Assigned to: Appropriations

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 ~~21st Century Financial Systems Council Establishment~~

3 ~~FOR the purpose of establishing the 21st Century Financial Systems Council to modernize~~
4 ~~the financial management information systems infrastructure in the State;~~
5 ~~specifying the responsibilities and priorities of the Council; establishing the position~~
6 ~~of the 21st Century Financial Systems Director in the Office of the Comptroller; and~~
7 ~~generally relating to the 21st Century Financial Systems Council.~~

1 **Comptroller - Modernization of State Financial Systems - Report**

2 FOR the purpose of requiring the Office of the Comptroller, State Treasurer's Office,
3 Department of Budget and Management, Department of Information Technology,
4 Department of General Services, to confer on the modernization of the financial
5 management information systems infrastructure in the State; and requiring the
6 Comptroller to submit a report of findings and recommendations to certain committees of
7 the General Assembly on or before a certain date.

8 BY adding to
9 Article – State Government
10 Section 4–113
11 Annotated Code of Maryland
12 (2021 Replacement Volume and 2022 Supplement)

1 **Preamble**

2 **WHEREAS, substantial risk and waste is generated from the continued use of the State**
3 **of Maryland’s existing accounting and payments platform, the Financial Management**
4 **and Information System (FMIS), due to the limited number of development resources,**
5 **cybersecurity risks, and difficulties delivering functional enhancements to meet**

6 evolving end-user needs and legislative mandates;

7 WHEREAS, the State must consider how future systems will integrate across the
8 State’s broader ecosystems and understand that there is substantial
9 risk if key finance functions remain fractured and residing in multiple systems;

10 WHEREAS, the State’s financial systems and applications are operated and
11 maintained by different Departments, contributing to a complex information
12 technology ecosystem and governance challenges, the Comptroller - as chief
13 financial officer for the State – should lead the effort to consolidate these systems
14 under a single 21st Century Financial Enterprise that shall become the state’s
15 financial system of record in coordination with the following partner agencies:
16 the Office of the State Treasurer, the Department of Budget and Management,
17 the Department of Information Technology, and the Department of General
18 Services;

19 WHEREAS, because the State has multiple Information Technology
20 modernization initiatives currently underway that may impact the
21 implementation of a new financial management and payroll system, a
22 coordinated strategy and strong legislative directive is required to minimize
23 additional IT complexities, technical debt, process inefficiency, and
24 overall cost.

13 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,
14 That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

15 Article – State Government

16 4–113.

17 ~~(A) (1) IN THIS SECTION THE FOLLOWING WORDS HAVE THE MEANINGS~~
18 ~~INDICATED.~~

19 ~~(2) “COUNCIL” MEANS THE 21ST CENTURY FINANCIAL SYSTEMS~~
20 ~~COUNCIL.~~

21 ~~(3) “DIRECTOR” MEANS THE 21ST CENTURY FINANCIAL SYSTEMS~~
22 ~~DIRECTOR.~~

~~1 (4) "ENTERPRISE" MEANS THE 21ST CENTURY FINANCIAL SYSTEMS
2 ENTERPRISE.~~

~~3 (B) THERE IS A 21ST CENTURY FINANCIAL SYSTEMS COUNCIL.~~

~~4 (C) THE COUNCIL CONSISTS OF THE FOLLOWING MEMBERS:~~

~~5 (1) THE COMPTROLLER, OR THE COMPTROLLER'S DESIGNEE;~~

~~6 (2) THE STATE TREASURER, OR THE TREASURER'S DESIGNEE;~~

~~7 (3) THE SECRETARY OF BUDGET AND MANAGEMENT, OR THE
8 SECRETARY'S DESIGNEE;~~

~~9 (4) THE SECRETARY OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY, OR THE
10 SECRETARY'S DESIGNEE; AND~~

~~11 (5) THE SECRETARY OF GENERAL SERVICES, OR THE SECRETARY'S
12 DESIGNEE.~~

~~13 (D) (1) THE PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE MAY APPOINT ONE MEMBER OF~~
~~14 THE SENATE TO SERVE IN AN ADVISORY CAPACITY ON THE COUNCIL.~~

~~15 (2) THE SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE MAY APPOINT ONE MEMBER OF THE~~
~~16 HOUSE OF DELEGATES TO SERVE IN AN ADVISORY CAPACITY ON THE COUNCIL.~~

~~17 (E) THE COMPTROLLER, OR THE COMPTROLLER'S DESIGNEE, SHALL~~
~~18 CHAIR THE COUNCIL.~~

~~19 (F) THE OFFICE OF THE COMPTROLLER SHALL PROVIDE STAFF FOR THE~~
~~20 COUNCIL.~~

~~21 (G) A MEMBER OF THE COUNCIL:~~

~~22 (1) MAY NOT RECEIVE COMPENSATION AS A MEMBER OF THE~~
~~23 COUNCIL; BUT~~

~~24 (2) IS ENTITLED TO REIMBURSEMENT FOR EXPENSES UNDER THE~~
~~25 STANDARD STATE TRAVEL REGULATIONS, AS PROVIDED IN THE STATE BUDGET.~~

1 (A) (1) IN THIS SECTION THE FOLLOWING WORDS HAVE THE MEANINGS
2 INDICATED.

3 (2) "FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT INFRASTRUCTURE" MEANS THE
4 INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY INFRASTRUCTURE THAT MANAGES
ALL PAYMENTS AND FUND TRANSFERS THROUGHOUT THE STATE
OF MARYLAND; CURRENTLY REFERRED TO AS THE "FINANCIAL
MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEM (FMIS).

5 (3) "21ST CENTURY FINANCIAL SYSTEMS ENTERPRISE"
6 MEANS THE INTENDED OUTCOME OF THIS PROCESS; A MODERN
'CLOUD-BASED' INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY INFRASTRUCTURE
THAT ADDRESSES ALL OF THE ONGOING CONCERNS ABOUT THE
OUTDATED EXISTING SYSTEM, FMIS.

7 (4) "DEPARTMENTS" MEANS THE:
(I) THE OFFICE OF THE COMPTROLLER;
(II) THE OFFICE OF THE STATE TREASURER;
(III) THE DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET AND
MANAGEMENT;
(IV) THE DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATION
TECHNOLOGY;
(V) THE DEPARTMENT OF GENERAL SERVICES.

26 (B) THE COUNCIL DEPARTMENTS SHALL:

1 (1) SET POLICIES, OBJECTIVES, AND PRIORITIES FOR THE
2 TRANSFORMATION OF THE STATE OF MARYLAND'S FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT
3 INFORMATION SYSTEMS INFRASTRUCTURE INTO THE 21ST CENTURY FINANCIAL
4 SYSTEMS ENTERPRISE;

5 (2) LEARN THE NEEDS AND PRIORITIES OF ALL USERS OF THE
6 FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEMS AND FUTURE KNOWN USERS OF
7 THE 21ST CENTURY FINANCIAL SYSTEMS ENTERPRISE;

8 (3) COLLABORATE WITH CONSULTANTS TO CREATE A PROJECT
9 PROPOSAL FOR, AND OVERSEE IMPLEMENTATION OF, THE 21ST CENTURY FINANCIAL
SYSTEMS ENTERPRISE;

10 (4) OVERSEE, COORDINATE, AND AUTHORIZE THE ASSIGNMENT OF
11 RESOURCES TO DEVELOPMENT OF THE 21ST CENTURY FINANCIAL SYSTEMS
12 ENTERPRISE;

13 (5) ESTABLISH WORKING GROUPS AS NEEDED; AND

14 (6) RECOMMEND ANY LEGISLATIVE CHANGES CONSIDERED
15 NECESSARY BY THE COUNCIL DEPARTMENTS TO ADDRESS FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT
16 INFORMATION SYSTEMS ISSUES.

17
18 (C) THE OFFICE OF THE COMPTROLLER SHALL PRODUCE A
REPORT TO THE LEGISLATURE DETAILING THE STATUS OF THE 21ST
CENTURY FINANCIAL SYSTEMS ENTERPRISE EVERY SIX MONTHS,
BEGINNING ON OR BEFORE DECEMBER 31, 2023, UNTIL THE FINAL
SUBMISSION DUE ON OR BEFORE JANUARY 1, 2027.

19 (D) THE COUNCIL DEPARTMENTS SHALL SET PRIORITIES TO:

20 (1) STANDARDIZE FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT FOR ALL STATE
21 AGENCIES BY REQUIRING ALL STATE AGENCIES TO PARTICIPATE IN THE
22 ENTERPRISE;

23 (2) PROVIDE SUPPORT TO PARTICIPATING UNITS IN ACCORDANCE
24 WITH THE POLICIES AND OBJECTIVES ESTABLISHED BY THE COUNCIL
DEPARTMENTS;

25 (3) CONFORM TO MODERNIZED BUSINESS AND TECHNOLOGY
26 STANDARDS; AND

27 (4) HOST AND MANAGE MODERNIZED APPLICATIONS AND SHARED
28 DATA FOR THE DELIVERY OF ALL ACCOUNTING SERVICES IN THE STATE;

29

~~30 (J) (1) THERE IS A 21ST CENTURY FINANCIAL SYSTEMS DIRECTOR IN
31 THE OFFICE OF THE COMPTROLLER.~~

~~32 (2) THE DIRECTOR SHALL BE APPOINTED BY AND SERVE AT THE
33 PLEASURE OF THE COMPTROLLER.~~

~~34 (3) THE DIRECTOR SHALL BE PART OF THE STAFF OF THE OFFICE OF
35 THE COMPTROLLER FOR ADMINISTRATIVE, STAFFING, AND BUDGETARY PURPOSES.~~

~~(4) THE DIRECTOR SHALL:~~

~~(15) USE AND MANAGE THE 21ST CENTURY FINANCIAL SYSTEMS ENTERPRISE TO ACHIEVE THE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES SET BY THE COUNCIL;~~

~~(H6) FACILITATE AND COORDINATE THE DELIVERY OF PORTFOLIO PRODUCTS AND SERVICES;~~

~~(H7) ENSURE THE FAITHFUL EXECUTION OF ALL AGREEMENTS ENTERED INTO ON BEHALF OF THE COUNCIL-DEPARTMENTS; AND~~

~~(IV8) OVERSEE AND BE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE OVERSIGHT, IMPLEMENTATION, AND MANAGEMENT OF THE 21ST CENTURY FINANCIAL SYSTEMS ENTERPRISE.~~

SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect ~~October~~ July 1, 2023.



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Giavante' Hawkins
Executive Director

To: Appropriations Committee

From: The Maryland Society of Accounting and Tax Professionals, Inc.

Re: HB0709 By: The President (By Request – Office of the Comptroller

Contact Person: Giavante Hawkins, Executive Director

Position: SUPPORT

21st Century Financial Systems Council - Establishment

The MD Society of Accounting and Tax Professionals (MSATP) has 2,000 CPAs and Professional Tax members, representing over 700,000 Maryland residents. The MD Society of Accounting and Tax Professionals supports bill HB709.

As the Executive Director of MSATP, I have been in constant communication with the Comptroller's office on issues that members or clients of members face. It has been brought to my attention on numerous occasions by staff and Directors at the Comptroller's office that the systems are outdated, and they cannot complete their duties within the office efficiently due to the old financial systems. It creates frustration in the state's accounting industry and clients.

Modernizing the Comptroller's financial system, and all state financial systems, should be a top priority to increase efficiency throughout the state of Maryland. Still, it is understood that an executive council is required to manage the project and oversee implementation, as it will be a large overhaul with a tremendous amount of data with high importance to making sure the system integrates and works well.

Therefore, we urge a FAVORABLE report on HB709.



Tuesday March 14, 2023

Maryland Minority Contractors Association, Inc. Testimony.

House Bill 709

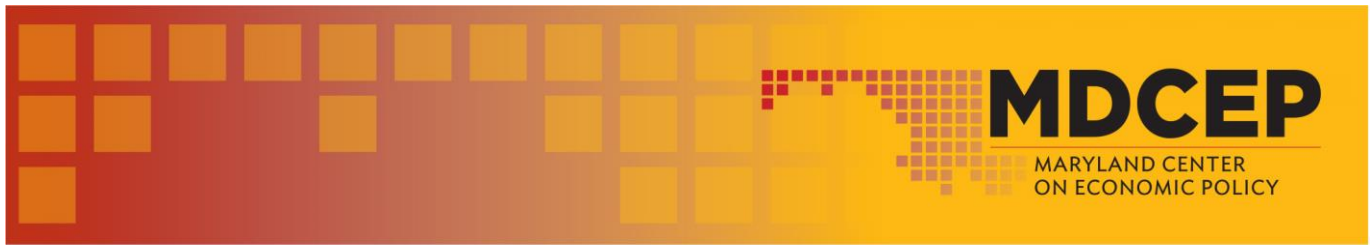
Good afternoon, Chair Barnes and Vice Chair Chang

I am here to express the support of Maryland Minority Contractors Association, Inc. for HB709 introduced at the request of Comptroller Brooke Lierman. Madame Comptroller has stated that Maryland's accounting and bill payment system is one of the oldest in the country. I have no doubt that the state's vintage system has caused many issues and until updated will continue to cause considerable delays in the processing of vendor invoices. Along with achievement of the level of participation mandated under law on state contracts, prompt payment is a priority concern for MMCA, Inc. members. We, therefore, wholeheartedly and unconditionally applaud the creation of the 21st Century Financial System Executive Council to investigate and provide guidance for the replacement of the existing legacy system, develop a request for proposal or other procurement mechanism for selection of one or more vendors to offer a modern system that affords both accountability and transparency and to oversee implementation of the new system.

Maryland Minority Contractors Association, Inc. urges a favorable report of House Bill 709.

Thank you,

Pless Jones Sr.



MARCH 14, 2023

Overhauling the State's Accounting System is Critical to a Well-Functioning State Government

Position Statement in Support of House Bill 709

Given before the House Appropriations Committee

Maryland's accounting system sits at the heart of state government operations, ensuring that employees, vendors, nonprofits that partner with the state, and others receive payments in a timely fashion. And, the system must also be able to respond to the government's unique needs for transparency and complying with public accounting best practices so that policymakers and the public can understand how the state is using our shared resources. **The Maryland Center on Economic Policy supports House Bill 709** because it would begin the process to replace the state's outdated accounting and payments system as soon as possible.

Maryland has one of the oldest accounting and payment processes in the country, relying on outdated mainframe technology rather than using modern cloud-based systems that most other states now use. Relying on outdated technology makes it harder for state agencies to perform basic functions of government and to comply with evolving transparency and reporting standards. It also creates a significant risk of delayed payments to vendors and nonprofits. This can have broader implications, as the state government is one of the largest employers in the state and its purchases of products and services help support other local businesses.

While state policymakers should address this need with urgency, replacing such a critical piece of technology must be done thoughtfully and with sufficient resources. HB 709 sets up a process to ensure all stakeholders are included in this planning process and that the state can plan to allocate appropriate funds and staff to oversee and execute this vital project.

For these reasons, the Maryland Center on Economic Policy respectfully requests that the Budget and Taxation Committee make a favorable report on House Bill 709.

Equity Impact Analysis: House Bill 709

Bill summary

This bill directs the Comptroller's Office to lead a multi-agency effort between the State Treasurer's Office, the Secretary of the Department of Budget and Management, the Secretary of the Department of Information Technology, and the Secretary of the Department of General Services to prepare for the timely replacement of the existing accounting and payments system, determine the needs of the partner agencies involved, and finally,

develop the RFP and oversee implementation. The bill also directs the Comptroller to produce regular reports to the Legislature on the status of this effort.

Background

Maryland has one of the oldest accounting and payment processes in the country, relying on outdated mainframe technology rather than using modern cloud-based systems that most other states now use. This has the potential to affect state employees, vendors, nonprofit organizations, and other stakeholders.

Equity Implications

The investments and services provided by our state government are critical to opening doors to opportunity and undoing past harms. None of this is possible without well-maintained technological and financial infrastructure. To the extent that the current outdated system results in delayed payments to small businesses and nonprofit organizations that are responsible for providing services to Marylanders, having outdated financial systems can affect the well-being of Maryland families. While a different set of computer systems was involved, the state's mishandling of unemployment insurance claims during the COVID-19 pandemic illustrates how relying on outdated technology can harm Marylanders, especially workers of color. Effective financial systems are also necessary for the state to comply with tracking and transparency best practices, including tracking needed to comply with the state's goals for contracting with small, women-owned, and minority-owned businesses.

Impact

House Bill 709 would potentially **improve racial and economic equity** in Maryland.



March 9, 2023

The Honorable Ben Barnes
Appropriations Committee
House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: HB 709, *"21st Century Financial Systems Council - Establishment"* FAVORABLE

Dear Chair Barnes and members of the Committee:

The Maryland Association of CPAs (MACPA) is a professional organization representing the CPA profession in Maryland, with more than 8,000 members statewide, and a history of serving the public interest since 1901. Our members provide services to individuals, not-for-profit organizations, small and medium-sized businesses, as well as Maryland's largest businesses.

MACPA is in favor of all efforts to improve the operations and efficiency of the state's financial systems. We support the Comptroller's initiative to establish the 21st Century Financial Systems Council. Modernization of the state's financial management information systems (FMIS) infrastructure is incredibly important to the continuity of operations for the state. Having the right FMIS in place will result in simplifying many of the overly complex and outdated accounting, purchasing, inventorying, and reporting processes currently in place. A modern FMIS provides access to data to evaluate spending, allows for more informed budget decisions and helps to clearly articulate future funding needs to lawmakers.

With guidance from the 21st Century Financial Systems Council, Maryland can procure a properly designed FMIS that will enhance financial policy compliance, transparency, management, execution, and long-term sustainment.

MACPA appreciates the opportunity to offer these comments, and we respectfully request a favorable report for HB 709.

Sincerely,

Rebekah J. Brown, CPA
Chief Executive Officer, MACPA



HB 709 - 21st Century Financial Systems Council - Establishment
House Appropriations Committee
March 10th, 2023
SUPPORT

Chair Barnes Vice-Chair and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of House Bill 709. This bill would create a council to oversee upgrading Maryland's financial management system.

CASH Campaign of Maryland promotes economic advancement for low-to-moderate income individuals and families in Baltimore and across Maryland. CASH accomplishes its mission through operating a portfolio of direct service programs, building organizational and field capacity, and leading policy and advocacy initiatives to strengthen family economic stability. CASH and its partners across the state achieve this by providing free tax preparation services through the IRS program 'VITA', offering free financial education and coaching, and engaging in policy research and advocacy. **Almost half of CASH's tax preparation clients earn less than \$20,000.**

One of the challenges identified by the Comptroller's Transition Committee is that Maryland is using an outdated financial management system. To address this concern, the workgroup recommended for the Comptroller's Office to, "collaborate with the Treasurer and Secretary of the Department of Budget and Management to implement a new accounting system for the State to replace the current accounting system (FMIS)." The full transition committee report can be found here: [Transition Report Comptroller of Maryland 2023](#).

CASH receives multiple grants paid by state agencies, several of which are reimbursement grants. There have been several instances of data not being updated properly by agencies that led to the Comptroller holding back our payments. In one case, CASH had over \$200,000 in funding held up by a \$15 flag from the Department of Labor, which they had never billed and immediately put into flag status.

HB 709 creates a 21st Century Financial Systems Council will ensure that the Comptroller's Office, and other relevant agencies and stakeholders will work together to investigate the best practices in implementing a better financial management system. Modernizing infrastructure will make the process more efficient and transparent for state agencies, businesses, and nonprofits across the state. Upgrading the system will be a prolonged process and require input from many different sources. HB 709 will create the 21st Century Financial Systems Director position to facilitate and coordinate the process of upgrading Maryland's financial management systems and oversee the implementation.

HB 709 will start the process of converting Maryland to a new financial management system that will be safe, effective, and the needs and priorities for all users will be considered.

We encourage you to return a favorable report for HB 709.

Creating Assets, Savings and Hope



BILL NO: HB709

TITLE: 21st Century Financial Systems Council - Establishment

COMMITTEE: Appropriations

HEARING DATE: March 14th, 2023

POSITION: FAVORABLE

ABOUT: TurnAround, Inc. was founded in 1978 and serves as the designated rape crisis center for Baltimore City and Baltimore County. TurnAround offers comprehensive services, including legal support, counseling, case management, and emergency shelter to those who have endured intimate partner violence, sexual violence, and human trafficking in Baltimore City, Baltimore County, and Howard County.

The pandemic was one of the most challenging periods for TurnAround – but also for a lot of other victim service providers and non-profits around the state. We saw dramatic increases in not just instances of violence, but also startling increases in level of violence – increases strangulations and near homicides. We also saw an increase in teen and adolescent sexual assault survivors seeking help – they were trapped in the house with their abuser with nowhere to turn. Some of our data points, showed an increased need of over 300%. As an example, our average numbers of calls for service pre-pandemic was around 2,500 to 3,000 this last year the number was over 10,000. We are not seeing these numbers decrease now – instead they’ve plateaued to what is now our new normal.

The other significant challenge we faced was financial – agencies around us were folding because of the economic downturn – and I remember telling one of my staff as we walked from the building in March of 2020 – no layoffs that’s the goal. We relied on our funders to help us get through a very tough period were we as the service provider was living invoice to invoice.

What a lot of our community does not realize that non-profits like TurnAround are mainly funded through reimbursable grants, which means every month we expend hundreds of thousands of dollars in payroll, bednights for fleeing survivors of violence, direct assistance for survivors who are literally starting their lives over after abuse and then wait sometimes for more than 60 days to get reimbursed by the state. We are required to have a cushion of cash at all times and don’t have the resources to have large reserves and banks rarely offer significant lines of credit to non-profits. Ultimately, one late payment leads to serious ramifications for non-profits and, in turn, that means services may be delayed or even denied to some of our most vulnerable community members.

As early as December of this last year, we were owed nearly half a million by state and local funders in delayed payments. Non-profits were drafting furlough policies while we were reading news stories about billions of dollars in surplus.

The system used by the Comptroller currently shows us what has been paid and what is in their system is unpaid but invoiced. That is all we know – so we wait and hope that our payments come on time. Utilizing technology to ensure the sustainability of our state service providers is



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POSITION: FAVORABLE

necessary for the safety of those who are impacted by intimate partner violence, sexual violence and human trafficking.

We request a favorable report for HB709. Thank you.