



Neighborhood Housing Services of Baltimore, Inc.

March 31, 2023

Delegate Ben Barnes
Appropriations Committee
House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: Senate Bill 643

Honorable Chair Barnes and Members of the Committee:

I am the Executive Director of Neighborhood Housing Services of Baltimore (NHS), and a resident of Baltimore City. Our organization believes that economic and social justice are a right for all people and communities. We promote this belief by removing barriers of access to homeownership, helping resident access resources to maintain their homes, and supporting communities historically impacted by systemic disinvestment.

SB643 provides operating funding to support community development groups impacting our communities. For many years the state has provided capital resources to complete projects without providing corresponding operating funds to support the investments. This disparity has resulted in community development groups struggling to survive in a significantly resource constrained environment. SB643 is a first step in addressing this inequality. By providing funding to support operations, community development groups will be able to build and sustain capacity to connect with residents and ensure ongoing community voice and leadership of this work. Failure to provide resources will result in the continuing exclusion of smaller organizations from opportunities to invest capital in their communities. This funding is critical as we migrate toward positive change supporting historically disinvested communities.

We ask that the Committee issue a ***favorable*** report on SB 643

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Daniel T. Ellis".

Daniel T. Ellis
Executive Director



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