



**Testimony**

**SB643 – Housing – Community Development Fund Program Act - Funding  
APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE**

APRIL 4, 2023

**Position: FAVORABLE**

Dear Chairman Barnes and Members of the Appropriations Committee:

*The Coppin Heights Community Development Corporation* urges this committee to vote a favorable report for **SB643 – Housing – Community Development Fund Program Act - Funding**

SB643 creates a permanent funding source for the Community Development Fund which was created in 2018. The funding is critical operating dollars for community-based organizations to use for affordable housing, neighborhood and commercial revitalization, housing and financial counseling, small business development, community services, and more.

We are seeking \$5 million from the Unclaimed Property Fund after usual disbursements have been made.

We are a local developer in the West Baltimore Coppin Heights Greater Rosemont corridor vested in eliminating blight, building community, and engaging in development without displacement. Both the Community Legacy, and BRNI are flexible sources of capital funding, and critical to our work. However, it is still not enough. Each year there are more than \$30 million in applications for this funding. 2012 Community Legacy funds were instrumental in our rehabilitation of the Historic Baltimore Hebrew Orphan Asylum, now a community state of the art Center for Healthy Living and Wellness. However, our 2022 BRNI application was denied due to limited funding. This impacted our ability to continue acquisition and development of property along the blighted, underserved West North Avenue corridor and delayed completion of the Revitalization Project. As the work grows, general operating support is the working capital nonprofits need to sustain our day-to-day operations. A lack of working capital prevents organizations from meeting basic operational needs, like payroll, supplies, and rent. Project dollars without corresponding operational dollars results in delays and non-completion of much needed community work. In the last five years, we have lost staff, and currently struggle to replace those areas of manpower need due to rising cost of living, or other factors that impact operational capacity.

Please vote a favorable report for SB643.

Respectfully Submitted:

*Dr. Gary D Rodwell, CEO  
Coppin Heights Community Development Corporation*

*Board of Directors*  
Dr. John Bullock  
*President*  
Bishop William Gaines  
*Vice President*  
Johns Hopkins  
*Secretary/Treasurer*  
Theotis Freeman  
Donald Covington  
Cheryl Gross  
Margaret Powell  
Minister Glen I Smith  
Dr Wanda McCoy  
Bishop Stanley Cruse

*CDC Staff*  
Dr. Gary Rodwell  
Chief Executive Officer  
Pastor Meldon Dickens  
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Angela Cole  
*Community Engagement  
Specialist*  
Crystal Parker, JD  
*Administration  
Resource Coordinator*