



**Testimony HB 826**  
**House Environment and Transportation Committee**  
**February 28, 2023**  
**Position: FAVORABLE**

Dear Chairman Barve and Members of the House Environment and Transportation Committee:

The Community Development Network of Maryland (CDN) is the voice for Maryland's community development sector and serves nearly 200 member organizations. CDN—focuses on small affordable housing developers, housing counseling agencies and community-based non-profits across the state of Maryland. The mission of CDN is to promote, strengthen and advocate for the community development sector throughout Maryland's urban, suburban and rural communities.

HB 826- Establishes a Statewide Rental Assistance Voucher Program in the Department of Housing and Community Development to provide vouchers and housing assistance payments for low-income families that are on a waiting list under the federal Housing Choice Voucher Program; and requires the Department and public housing agencies to administer the State Program.

In Maryland, households with children, older adults and people with disabilities are most at risk for eviction. Rental assistance not only enables families to meet their housing needs but it leaves them with more resources to meet other basic needs. Evictions create significant costs for state and local governments including costs associated with shelters, education, transportation for homeless youth, foster care, and health care provided in hospitals rather than community-based care.

Many believe that eviction is a high poverty urban problem but it is clear that suburban and rural renters face many of the same challenges as their city counterparts, including eviction. Over the past decade, research shows that evictions reinforce poverty and limit housing opportunities for Maryland's most fragile citizens. The stain of an eviction sets Marylanders on a path of housing insecurity that limits educational and economic opportunities, and increases health problems for them and their families.

A state housing voucher could be a lifeline for essential workers throughout the state of Maryland.

We ask that the committee issue a favorable report on HB 826.

Submitted by Claudia Wilson Randall, Executive Director, Community Development Network