



Neighborhood Housing Services of Baltimore, Inc.

February 17, 2023

Delegate Vanessa E. Atterbeary, Chair
Ways and Means Committee
House Office Building Room 131
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: House Bill 665

Honorable Chair Atterbeary 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 to homeownership, helping resident access resources to maintain their homes, and supporting communities historically impacted by systemic disinvestment.

Across the state of Maryland utilization of available tax benefit programs remains at levels significantly below the number of eligible residents. Nationally, similar benefit programs that require participants to proactively submit an application have utilization rates between 20-40% of eligible recipients. The most effective programs have automatic enrollment or utilize information already available to the state to determine eligibility. HB665 would require the Comptroller and the State Department of Assessments and Taxation to complete a report identifying ways the tax benefit programs could be more easily accessed by Maryland residents. NHS strongly support this level of research and collaboration between these state agencies. We also look forward to reviewing the report once completed and working with the General Assembly to identify ways to remove barriers preventing Marylanders from accessing benefits designed to help them.

We request a favorable report on HB665.

Sincerely,

Daniel T. Ellis
Executive Director



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