



OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

**Testimony in Support of House Bill 627  
Chair: Delegate Pena-Melnyk**

**February 27, 2023**

Dear Chairwoman, Pena-Melnyk, and members of the committee:

On behalf of the students, faculty, and staff of Coppin State University, thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony in support of House Bill 627.

Coppin State University holds the distinct designation of being an anchor institution. As such, we have the responsibility and play a crucial role in lifting the community of West Baltimore. Since 1900 we have served as a catalyst for creating upward and economic mobility for our students and the surrounding community.

Currently, I serve as chair of the West North Avenue Development Authority. The Authority was created in 2021 to revitalize the neighborhood and invest in economic development. Since then, the WNADA has appointed an Executive Director and worked with numerous community and neighborhood organizations to develop a comprehensive revitalization plan for West Baltimore. They have worked with partners around Baltimore to secure over \$300,000 in funding as well as identify five priority zones for economic development in the area.

House Bill 627 seeks to add to WNADA authority, the Maryland Secretary of Commerce, and the Executive Director of Maryland Economic Development Corporation to ensure the smooth acquisition of resources. In addition, the legislation exempts the WNADA from division 2 of the Maryland Procurement Law to allow the Authority to act with less bureaucratic burden in contracting for professional services and excel in the development with parity to that which has occurred in East Baltimore. Therefore, I am requesting your consideration and favorable support to expand the membership of the WNADA and exempt them from contracting issues that might slow the progress of economic development in the area.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Anthony L. Jenkins", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Anthony L. Jenkins, Ph.D.  
President