



Written Testimony in Support of House Senate Bill 53: *Maryland Nonprofit Development Center Program – Nonprofit, Interest-Free, Micro Bridge Loan (NIMBL) Account – Funding Ways and Means Committee, March 23, 2023 –FAVORABLE*

Franca Brilliant, Advocacy and Development Director, Nonprofit Montgomery

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to testify today. My name is Franca Brilliant and I am the Advocacy and Development Director for Nonprofit Montgomery. We support our nearly 200-member nonprofit organizations with technical assistance, training and resources, and advocacy on issues of importance to the nonprofit sector—such as the one you are considering today.

Nonprofit Montgomery reiterates its support for Senate Bill 53, which would increase the funding of the NIMBL Account, allowing more Maryland nonprofits to take advantage of this interest free, micro bridge loan. As you all know, nonprofits are essential partners to government, providing food, shelter, mental and physical health support, recreation, arts, academic enrichment, and a thousand other services to all of Maryland’s residents. The past few years have underlined the importance of the role they play—without the support of these organizations, Marylanders would have suffered far more than they did from the pandemic, inflation, and other ongoing challenges. During the pandemic, government agencies—from the Federal level right down to municipalities--worked hard to move money quickly into the hands of their nonprofit partners to ensure that they could respond to critical community needs. It was an impressive act of coordination and flexibility, and a marked contrast to what nonprofits usually experience.

I have worked with nonprofit organizations for over 30 years and have seen so many examples of nonprofits struggling to start programs while contracts were stuck in various stages of procurement that I have lost track. In my own direct experience, I have seen state level contracts that were endlessly tangled in red tape and reimbursable county contracts that couldn’t provide any funding for months after work began. Most nonprofits don’t have the financial reserves to float a major project with their own funds while waiting for their money to come through. The burden falls especially heavily on the organizations that most need this support—small community-based organizations, many of which are led by people of color.

This is why expanding the NIMBL loan fund is so important. The original legislation has been understood as making funding discretionary, which was not meant to be the case. Demand for the fund has risen and exceeds what is available; the need is there. This bill would restore funding to the \$1,000,000 level that was originally intended.

In its current state, with very limited funds, the NIMBL fund is a good program but with increased funding it could be a great one.

Please support SB 53. Thank you.