



Testimony on SB 459 – Alterations to the Maryland Efficient Grant Application Council
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Position – Favorable

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of the extension of time for the Maryland Efficient Grant Application (MEGA) Council to meet. I have worked as a fundraising consultant for dozens of nonprofit organizations in Maryland since 2000, and I am testifying on their behalf – as well as on behalf of the 41,000 other nonprofits in the State of Maryland. With my assistance, over the years my clients have applied for and received dozens of grants and contracts from various State agencies and departments.

The MEGA Council was established for the purpose of streamlining and standardizing Maryland's grant application and reporting requirements, which are currently quite onerous and fragmented. Every agency has different requirements and even within agencies, a nonprofit responding to multiple RFP's and NOFO's may have to complete different narratives, different budget templates, etc. – even when they are applying for funding for essentially the same program. This is time-consuming and resource-draining and takes away from a nonprofit's ability to serve its constituency.

The COVID-19 pandemic and a lack of staff support prevented the MEGA Council from completing its work and making recommendations for improvements within the timeframe of the original legislation. SB 459 would extend the timeframe to 2028, which is more realistic. This bill also adds the Comptroller or her designee to the Council, which will assist in making sure that the final product is consistent with best practices and that it meets the needs of the nonprofits, the State agencies, and the people who are ultimately responsible for ensuring that the State's financial outlays are in the best interests of Maryland taxpayers.

The addition of the State Grants Ombudsperson position will assist in reaching these goals, as well. The Ombudsperson will also be helpful by providing technical assistance to nonprofits in accessing and navigating the state grants process; publicizing grant opportunities to nonprofits; and resolving delays in the grants process – which unfortunately happen frequently.

Thank you for the opportunity to present this testimony. I request a favorable report on SB 459.