



NAACP

Maryland
STATE CONFERENCE

March 7, 2024

Finance
Maryland General Assembly
Annapolis, Maryland

Re: SB 699 - Cannabis – Community Reinvestment and Repair Fund – Distribution and Use of Funds for Baltimore City

Members of the Committee,

I am writing to you today on behalf of the Maryland NAACP to express our strong support for Senate Bill 699, sponsored by Senator Washington. This bill is crucial for addressing the systemic disparities and injustices faced by communities of color in Baltimore City.

For decades, Baltimore City has grappled with the devastating effects of disinvestment and neglect. These communities have been disproportionately burdened with poverty, substandard housing, and inadequate resources due to systemic inequalities and discriminatory practices such as redlining.

Senate Bill 699 aims to address these longstanding disparities by allocating funds from the Community Reinvestment and Repair Fund directly to Baltimore City. By establishing an Equitable Community Investment Council in each Baltimore City State legislative district, the bill ensures that the allocation of funds is guided by the needs and priorities of the communities most affected by disinvestment.

Community-based organizations are crucial in providing essential services and programs to uplift and empower residents. However, these organizations often struggle to secure the funding necessary to meet the growing demand for their services.

Senate Bill 699 addresses this challenge by allocating funds through grants to community-based organizations for critical services and programs. This targeted investment will enable these organizations to expand their reach, improve their capacity, and better serve the needs of our communities.

Moreover, the bill empowers local communities to develop their own plans for allocating funds, ensuring that resources are directed where they are most needed and will have the greatest impact. This approach recognizes that communities are best positioned to identify their own priorities and solutions.

In conclusion, Senate Bill 699 represents a significant step towards addressing the legacy of disinvestment and neglect in Baltimore City. By reinvesting in our communities and supporting the vital work of community-based organizations, we can begin to build a more equitable and inclusive city for all residents.

I urge a favorable report on this important legislation. Thank you for your attention to this critical issue.

In Service,

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