

House Bill 541

Department of Commerce – Nonprofit Organizations Navigator -- Established

House Health & Government Operations Committee
February 18, 2025

Testimony in Support

The Association of Community Services (ACS) of Howard County, a 501c3 nonprofit, is a membership organization serving nonprofit agencies in our community. Our nonprofit members provide critical services ranging from mentoring to food assistance, housing, legal services, transportation, and more.

Most nonprofits in our county are small. About a third of our members, for example, report budgets under \$100k; nearly half report budgets under \$500,000. This means they are functioning with at most 3-4 staff; many are all volunteer or have only one paid staff person.

Nonprofits of all sizes often struggle with navigating the complex structure of State government, making it difficult to identify potential funding opportunities, obtain technical assistance, meet reporting requirements, and resolve any delays in payments. But it is especially burdensome for small nonprofits – the majority of our sector – that lack the past experience or the current capacity to navigate the bureaucracy effectively. As a result, they may waste precious time or miss out on opportunities entirely.

A “navigator” within State Government to assist nonprofits in dealing with the various agencies would improve their ability to access state programs and funding, which would in turn improve their ability to provide the essential services our county residents rely upon.

We strongly urge a favorable report on House Bill 541. Thank you.

Submitted by,

Lois K Mikkila

Lois K Mikkila
Executive Director
Association of Community Services of Howard County
lois.mikkila@acshoco.org
443-518-7701