



Housing Initiative Partnership, Inc.

35 YEARS of Housing Security | Financial Stability | Community Success

Testimony to the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
SB566 Real Property - Filing Fee for Residential Mortgage Foreclosure - Increase
Position: Favorable

February 4, 2025

The Honorable Senator William Smith, Chair
Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
2 East, Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
cc: Members, Judicial Proceedings Committee

Honorable Chair Smith and Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee:

Housing Initiative Partnership, Inc. (HIP) is a 35-year-old nonprofit developer and HUD-approved housing counseling agency. HIP develops innovative affordable housing, revitalizes neighborhoods, and equips people to achieve their housing and financial goals. The organization's vision is that every person lives in high-quality affordable housing in a thriving community.

Since becoming a **HUD-approved Housing Counseling Agency** in 2003, HIP's multilingual Certified Housing Counselors have counseled and educated over 40,000 Montgomery and Prince George's County renters, homebuyers and homeowners, helping to resolve their housing challenges and achieve their housing goals. HIP has specifically provided counseling and advocacy to approximately 12,000 homeowners struggling with mortgage default, helping them access resources to preserve their home from foreclosure. Our communities have come to rely on our housing counseling services – which have been critical to help vulnerable residents mitigate the worst harm during the Great Recession, the Pandemic and the current housing crisis caused by inflation and short supply.

SB 566 would increase the filing fee for residential foreclosures. The fees fund the Maryland Housing Counseling Fund. The fund pays for housing counseling, legal services as well as foreclosure mediation. This fee has not been changed since 2010. According to recent analysis by ATTOM, Maryland was among the states with the highest foreclosure rates in December 2024.

Maryland Housing Counseling Fund has been a cornerstone of our counseling funding over the past two decades, helping us to serve between 1,000-1,500 households each year to navigate their rental, pre-purchase, foreclosure or post-purchase issues. With federal sources like HSCP and HAF ending, we are now operating at a deficit. We urge the state to increase funds available to the MHCF to support the critical services housing counselors provide to Marylanders.





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We support SB566 and urge a favorable report.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Mary Hunter". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Mary Hunter
Director, Housing Counseling & Services
Housing Initiative Partnership, Inc. (HIP)