

February 11, 2025

Maryland House Ways and Means Committee  
131 Taylor House Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

**Re: House Bill 801 – Maryland Financial Empowerment Center Network Pilot Program**

Chair Atterbeary and Members of the Ways & Means Committee:

On behalf of the Maryland Consumer Credit Association (“MCCA”), thank you for the opportunity to support House Bill 801, which would establish the Maryland Financial Empowerment Center Network Pilot Program.

The MCCA is comprised of three national installment lenders including Lendmark Financial Services, Mariner Finance, and OneMain Financial, which have a 100+ year history in serving the credit needs of consumers with imperfect credit. Together, these lenders have sixty-one branch locations across the state and are currently providing over \$1,000,000,000 in consumer loans to more than 150,000 Maryland consumers. In addition, the MCCA is proud to employ over 1,000 Marylanders.

As some of the largest nonbank lenders in the country, the MCCA supports initiatives to increase consumer access to financial literacy tools and financial counseling that can empower consumers to build a strategy to handle difficult financial situations. Financial literacy and one-on-one budgeting support are cornerstones of the MCCA’s approach to lending. Our brick-and-mortar presence allows consumers to visit a local branch and work with our team members on developing a budget, which helps them understand their financial needs before discussing appropriate loan offerings. Furthermore, some of our members have even developed their own financial literacy programs that teach secondary education students the importance of using credit to manage expenses without falling into a cycle of debt. Launched in 2022, the program has already reached seventy-seven high schools in the State of Maryland.

House Bill 801 offers consumers like our customers an important additional source of support in dealing with financial difficulties. We believe the establishment of a Financial Empowerment Pilot Program is an important first step towards increasing access to these services and we welcome government support to supplement our members’ similar financial empowerment efforts.

Sincerely,

Amanda Jablonski

Executive Director, Maryland Consumer Credit Association