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*Legislative District 41*  
Baltimore City

Health and Government Operations  
Committee

*Chair*

Health Occupations and  
Long-Term Care Subcommittee

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Joint Committee on Administrative,  
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Testimony of Delegate Samuel I Rosenberg

Before the Appropriations Committee

In Support of

**House Bill 809**

**Walter Sondheim Jr. Public Service Internship Scholarship Program – Funding**

Chair Barnes and Members of the Committee:

Governor Moore has made public service a pillar of his administration, investing in programs that inspire young people to give back to their communities. House Bill 809 would increase funding for state-funded internships by 25% beginning in Fiscal Year 2028. These state funded programs include the Governor's Summer Internship Program, the Sondheim Maryland Nonprofit Leadership Internship Program, and the Sondheim Public Service Law Fellows Program. This will ensure that more students can gain firsthand experience in government and nonprofit sectors.

The demand for qualified professionals in public service is growing. Many of our most critical sectors—law, social work, transportation, and nonprofit leadership—depend on a steady pipeline of talented and committed individuals. By expanding this scholarship program, we would encourage students to explore these fields, build connections, and ultimately pursue careers dedicated to the public good. Too often, students eager to serve find themselves unable to accept internships because they are unpaid and financially unfeasible. This bill helps to remove that barrier, ensuring that students from all backgrounds—not just those who can afford to work without pay—have access to these invaluable experiences.

In 2007, I helped pass a bill to establish the Walter Sondheim Jr. Public Service Internship Scholarship Summer Program. In 2015, the program was expanded to spring and fall semesters. This program has been enormously successful since its founding and expansion.

To be clear, public service is not just a job—it is a calling. With this legislation, we are sending a strong message to Maryland's students that their passion for serving others is valued and

supported. **I respectfully urge a favorable report on HB 809**, so that we can continue to cultivate the leaders our state needs now and in the future.

February 24<sup>th</sup>, 2026