

**Testimony on House Bill 809**  
**Walter Sondheim Jr. Public Service Internship Scholarship Program - Funding**  
**House Appropriations Committee**  
**February 24, 2026**

**Position: Support**

Maryland Nonprofits is a statewide association of almost 2000 nonprofit organizations and institutions. We support House Bill 809 to increase funding for the Maryland Public Sector Scholars Program that trains and prepares the next generation of public service leaders in our State.

The program is open to college students who are rising juniors and seniors (as well as some graduate students) enrolled at Maryland institutions or Maryland residents who are attending out of state institutions. The program offers those accepted to the program a paid summer fellowship working with nonprofit organizations through the Walter Sondheim Jr. Maryland Nonprofit Leadership Program, or with state agencies through the Governor's Summer Internship Program, the Maryland Department of Transportation Fellows Program, and the Sondheim Public Service Law Fellows Program. This program is building the pipeline of new leadership in government and our nonprofit community.

Due to current budget constraints, hundreds of talented enthusiastic aspiring public leaders are turned away each year. House Bill 809 provides resources to expand the number of interns that can be engaged each year.

At Maryland Nonprofits we have had the opportunity to work first-hand with five outstanding individuals through the Walter Sondheim Jr. Maryland Nonprofit Leadership Program Fellows in the last five years. These individuals have helped us to create resources, tools, and training programs that current and future nonprofit leaders need - to be compliant with the laws, to improve the ways their boards govern, to have more impactful programs, and to raise additional resources. Our team members have also been involved in providing some of the professional development opportunities to fellows in the program through presentations about the size, scope and impact of Maryland's nonprofit community.

We urge you to give House Bill 809 a **favorable report**.