



February 26, 2026

SPOKEN TESTIMONY * HOUSE ECONOMIC MATTERS COMMITTEE * ANNAPOLIS

Good afternoon. My name is Steven Sellers Lapham, and I am president of the nonprofit civic organization CHARM Maryland, with CHARM standing for Common Ownership Community Homeowners Advocating for Reform in Maryland. Thank you, Chair Kriselda Valderrama, Vice Chair Lorig Charkoudian, and all the committee members for your diligent work on bills. We favor those that could improve access to fair and affordable housing for all Marylanders for years to come. See our Advocacy webpage.

CHARM Maryland, in furtherance of our Vision and Mission,

STRONGLY SUPPORTS

HB 853 “Real Property - Regulation of Common Ownership Community Managers”

This bill establishes a State Licensing program in the Maryland Department of Labor, requiring licensing of all common ownership community (COC) property managers. Boards and homeowners rely heavily upon property management companies to help association complying with state laws that govern COCs, and for collecting and managing association funds in a fiscally responsible manner. This important licensing program will ensure that property managers meet certain minimum standards and have the experience, education, and knowledge to provide the required services. Currently, there are no such requirements or professional standards for COC property managers. This bill aims to protect the interests of Maryland individual homeowners living in COCs and to promote their financial sustainability.

That is the end of our official position statement. In the seconds remaining, I want to state our appreciation for the efforts of the first sponsor of this bill, Delegate Marvin E. Homes Jr., who – over many years – has studied the problems that COC homeowners face, resulting in some bills that could reform the system for the better – all the while himself serving on county commissions, CCOCs, in both Montgomery and Prince George’s counties, that strive to resolve conflicts between homeowners and their governing association boards. This bill is one of several before the House this year that – while not solving all of the problems that individual COC homeowners face – will, we can hope, shine a bright light

into the future, illuminating a path forward toward securing fair and affordable housing in the State of Maryland. Thank you.

Sincerely,

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Steven Sellers Lapham, President, CHARM Maryland, Inc.

Common Ownership Community Homeowners Advocating for Reform (CHARM) in Maryland

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