



To: House Government, Labor, and Elections Committee

For: SB 69 – Nonprofit Organizations Navigator – Repeal of Termination Provision

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Thank you for the opportunity to present this testimony in favor of repealing the termination provision of the Nonprofit Navigator position within the Department of Commerce.

I have worked as a fundraising consultant for dozens of nonprofit organizations in Maryland since 2000, and I am submitting testimony on their behalf – as well as on behalf of the 40,000+ other nonprofits in the State of Maryland. With my assistance, over the years my clients have applied for and received dozens of grants and contracts from various state and local agencies and departments.

That's the good news. The bad news is that my clients – any many other nonprofit organizations that I hear about – often run into issues that come up throughout the grants process. Some of the challenges that we have encountered include:

- An application process that is confusing, opaque, sometimes even nonsensical.
- Grant awards that are extremely slow to be processed – sometimes taking several years (yes years!)
- Reimbursements that are extremely slow to be processed – usually taking 4-5 months and sometimes even longer.

Here is just one example: One of my clients was awarded a State bond initiative for capital improvements to their facility in June 2022. Many, many months went by over the next two years, during which time DGS staff were either unhelpful or unresponsive. The Maryland Historic Trust had already given approval for rehabilitation of the site, so this was one hurdle that my client did not have to overcome. All paperwork finally was approved in summer 2024, at which point my client was told that they had to start all over again in the fall and submit the same paperwork through the new grants portal.

That was completed towards the end of 2024 and we were told that the next step would be to have the grant award go before the Board of Public Works. This took even more time. After several false starts, the bond initiative was finally referred to the Board of Public Works in April

2025, where it was approved unanimously with no discussion. However, due to agency staff turnover and lack of responsiveness, it then took until October 2025 before we finally reached the stage where we could submit invoices for reimbursement.

The result of all of these delays is that my clients and many other nonprofit organizations spend lots of time on logistical challenges that have nothing to do with running their programs and delivering their services to Marylanders in need.

The Nonprofit Navigator is in place to address just these sorts of issues. The position provides Maryland's nonprofit sector with someone who can provide technical assistance and guide them through the challenges and complexities of government grants and contracts, and hopefully expedite paperwork and payments. As a member of the Maryland Efficient Grant Application (MEGA) Council and the Chair of its Customer Service Workgroup, the Navigator can serve as a liaison between nonprofits and grant-making agencies to help resolve issues in a more timely fashion. I urge you to repeal the sunset provision of this position so the Navigator can continue to assist nonprofits in accessing State resources so they can better deliver services to their communities.