



THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Testimony in Support of House Bill 147:

Nonprofit Organizations Navigator – Termination Provision – Repeal

January 27, 2026

Good Afternoon Chair, Vice Chair and members of the Government, Labor and Elections Committee. I'm Delegate Pam Guzzone representing Howard County's District 13, and I am here in support of House Bill 147, which makes technical changes to the bill (HB 541) passed last year establishing the Nonprofit Navigator position within the Department of Commerce to assist nonprofits in accessing and applying for state grant programs.

As you may remember from discussion on last year's bill, Maryland has over 40,000 nonprofit organizations, each one of them providing needed services to our communities. Grants are a crucial source of support for nonprofits, and complicated grant application processes can be significant barriers to accessing and utilizing critical funding.

The Nonprofit Navigator position is designed to serve as a bridge between nonprofits and grant makers by removing barriers to accessing available resources, helping to locate appropriate grant opportunities, providing grant writing and other technical support and facilitating communications with grant makers. For these reasons, continuing the Navigator role is crucial. In the few months since Jessica Dorion started in the Navigator position, she has:

- Assisted almost 3 dozen Maryland nonprofits in 12 counties to find and apply for grants
- Helped 145 nonprofit employees register for technical assistance training
- Successfully navigated \$370,000 in funding for Maryland non-profits
- Created and published a monthly newsletter
- Created and provided in-person training to a state-wide group of over 100

During floor debate last year an amendment was passed on the Senate side creating a 2-year sunset for the position. The sunset provision meant the Navigator is a contractual position without benefits. This bill simply removes the sunset provision so this valuable role can be maintained and the employee can receive benefits. Let's continue to empower our nonprofit organizations by helping to ensure they can access the resources they need to support our communities. Thank you for your attention and I request a favorable report on HB 147.