



TESTIMONY FOR HB0097
DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT – OFFICE OF
DIGITAL INCLUSION – ESTABLISHED (DIGITAL CONNECTIVITY ACT OF 2021)

Bill Sponsor: Delegate Lierman

Committee: Economic Matters

Organization Submitting: Maryland Legislative Coalition

Person Submitting: Cecilia Plante, co-chair

Position: FAVORABLE

I am submitting this testimony in favor of HB0097 on behalf of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. The Maryland Legislative Coalition is an association of activists - individuals and grassroots groups in every district in the state. We are unpaid citizen lobbyists and our Coalition supports well over 30,000 members.

Maryland needs a plan and a person, and a staff that will ensure that all residents of Maryland have access to quality, affordable broadband service. We have all seen how students and teachers struggle when they don't have reliable broadband. Some students have had to leave the home in order to do schoolwork.

But it's not just about school. It's about people who work from home, people looking for jobs and generally, just being connected in our society. There are places where broadband is not stable, speeds are very different, and where there is only one provider. Prices are very different by area, and some people cannot afford to be connected. In many places, existing broadband needs to be updated.

We need someone to take a look at this and come up with a plan to make Maryland a more digitally connected state. We need good follow through, as well.

We support this bill and recommend a **FAVORABLE** report in committee.