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Budget and Taxation Committee

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**THE SENATE OF MARYLAND**  
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**Testimony for Senate Bill 697**

**State Procurement - Minority Business Enterprise Program - Participation by Gender or Race  
Health and Government Operations**

**March 31, 2021**

Madam Chair Pendergrass and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to present Senate Bill 697 - State Procurement - Minority Business Enterprise Program - Participation by Gender or Race. This bill allows minority, women-owned businesses to report their dual ownership status for the Minority Business Enterprise (MBE) program.

Currently, MBE laws require agencies to make efforts to ensure that 29% of the total dollar value of their procurement goes directly or indirectly to businesses that are minority or women-owned. These businesses, however, must choose to be either designated as a minority or women-owned business – they are unable to be designated as both. This prohibition hinders the accuracy of MBE data and does not reflect the true ownership of business.

Senate Bill 697 is a product of the President's Advisory Workgroup on Equity and Inclusion and allows businesses to identify their dual ownership status as both women-owned and minority-owned. We are hopeful that this bill will more accurately represent businesses and MBE data.

Thank you for your consideration and I respectfully ask for a favorable report of Senate Bill 697.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Addie C. Eckardt".

Senator Addie C. Eckardt