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Testimony on House Bill 851
State Government – Maryland Reparations Commission –
Establishment (Maryland Repair Act)
House Health and Government Operations Committee

Position: Favorable

Maryland Nonprofits is a statewide association of almost 1800 nonprofit organizations and institutions. We urge you to support House Bill 851, the “Maryland Repair Act”.

Maryland’s future growth, well-being and economic prosperity can only be assured when everyone regardless of age, race, religion, socio-economic background, gender identity, location, or disability, can share fairly in a prosperous and inclusive economy without race-based or other structural barriers that impede them.

The COVID-19 pandemic has heightened awareness of the continuing effects of systemic racism, economic unfairness, and other social inequities. Every day these affect people of color disproportionately directly in terms of illness, death, and economic losses. Our research has found that this extends even to nonprofit organizations led by people of color.

Awareness of these facts is important, but it is not a cure or remedy. The effects of generations of racial discrimination and systemic inequities, in health, education, housing, business and employment, are not displaced or fixed by “awareness”.

House Bill 851 will establish the Maryland Reparations Commission to develop and administer a program to provide compensatory benefits to the descendants of individuals enslaved in the State. Under this program, any individual whose ancestors were enslaved in the State will be eligible to receive. The legislation also authorizes the Commission to seek the assistance of State agencies to develop and evaluate processes and applications. The bill also includes a mandate that the Governor to include in the annual budget bill such sums as necessary to carry out the Act.

We urge you to give House Bill 851 a favorable report.



Maryland Nonprofits’ mission is to strengthen organizations and networks for greater quality of life and equity.