

PA House Finance Committee Hearing on House Bill 1429

Tuesday – June 27 at 9:30 a.m.

State Capitol Building

Representative Steve Samuelson, Finance Committee Chairman

Representative Keith J. Greiner, Finance Committee Republican Chairman

Chairman Samuelson, Chairman Greiner, and members of the House Finance Committee.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony regarding the Neighborhood Assistance Program (NAP.) As executive director of the Wilksburg Community Development Corporation and on behalf of neighborhood organizations across the Commonwealth, I am here today to respectfully request your support of House Bill 1429, which seeks to expand the Pennsylvania Department of Community & Economic Development's (PADCED) Neighborhood Assistance Tax Credit Program (NAP).

House Bill 1429, sponsored by Representative Aerion Abney, expands the Neighborhood Assistance Program from \$36 million to \$72 million. This bill also upgrades the program's credit percentages to make it more competitive with existing tax credits.

The Neighborhood Assistance Program (NAP) has served as a resource for nonprofits, businesses and low-income neighborhoods for more than 30 years.

Created in 1971, the NAP tax credit was set at \$18 million. The current \$36 million cap was raised in 2018 which resulted in more projects across the state. This year, FY2023, 213 community organizations received support. However, given the increased participation and success of the program, 312 applications were submitted resulting in 99 that were not funded.

As the director of a community development organization, I can speak to the importance of the Neighborhood Assistance Program.

The Wilksburg Community Development Corporation (WCDC) was founded to promote the revitalization of Wilksburg, a first-tier suburb of Pittsburgh. Located in Wilksburg's central business district, our primary activities include implementing a Business District Revitalization Plan to enhance Wilksburg's main street, encourage development, restore vacant properties, and stabilize the community.

The Wilkesburg Community Development Corporation opened our office in June of 2010. We were able to hire an Executive Director and Office Manager. Our budget that first year was slightly over \$300,000, thanks to the Neighborhood Partnership Program.

Since 2010, the Wilkesburg Community Development Corporation has received \$6 million in corporate contributions thanks to the NPP and our corporate sponsors. The Wilkesburg CDC has matched over \$12 million in direct support from foundations, corporations and private contributions. We have tracked over \$100 million in investment in Wilkesburg during this time.

The Neighborhood Partnership Program has supported two significant anchor building projects in our business district, including the historic Wilkesburg Train Station restoration. We are currently facilitating five major development projects that will provide new office and retail locations and over 100 new housing units.

The Neighborhood Partnership Program allows us to provide our residents with homeowner acquisition and repair programs, and vacant property restoration and preservation support. Our core programs assist Wilkesburg-based businesses, entrepreneurs, artists, and youth.

Wilkesburg is one of 59 community organizations in Pennsylvania that are currently supported by the Neighborhood Partnership Program (NPP). These community-based organizations are revitalizing their neighborhoods and downtowns. And, we know that more communities will benefit with the expansion of the NAP Tax Credit Program.

Please support HB 1429 and the expansion of the Neighborhood Assistance Program as we work together to fully support neighborhood organizations partnerships throughout Pennsylvania.

*Tracey Evans, Executive Director
Wilkesburg Community Development Corporation*