



HB5606 House Amendment 1 – SUPPORT Office of Economic Equity & Empowerment

Mr. Chairman and committee members,

I am Holly Ambuehl, Director of Policy and Government Affairs for Forefront. Forefront is Illinois' statewide membership alliance for the nonprofit and philanthropic sectors. The sector we represent is comprised of over 50,000 operating nonprofit organizations that employ almost 600,000 people, constituting 11% of our state's economy.

Forefront supports HB5606 with House Amendment 1. HA1 ensures DCEO has the statutory authority to support nonprofit businesses. The Senate companion bill, SB3805, made this same change via Floor Amendment 1, which was adopted on 3/21/24 and awaits 3rd read. DCEO supports this amendment as well, for which we are grateful.

In the introduced version, Sec. 605-1032 (b) directs DCEO to “assist minority-owned businesses, women-owned businesses, veteran-owned businesses, businesses owned by persons with disabilities, ...”

Nonprofits do not have owners. Therefore, as drafted, HB5606 may not give DCEO the statutory authority to serve nonprofit businesses unless the technical change in House Amendment 1 is adopted.

The activities of the Office are highly relevant to the nonprofit sector. In the introduced bill:

- Sec 605-1032 (b)1 refers to promoting “State and federal funding opportunities.”
- Sec 605-1032 (b)3 refers to applying for “State grant funds.”
- Sec 605-1032 (b)4 refers to “business formation, business planning, capital access, and marketing...”.

Failing to give the Office the authority to support the nonprofit sector in these ways would be a significant missed opportunity.

Please contact me with any questions.

Holly Ambuehl
Director of Policy and Government Affairs, Forefront