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Baltimore City

Health and Government Operations
Committee

Chair

Health Occupations and
Long-Term Care Subcommittee

House Chair

Joint Committee on Administrative,
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Testimony of Delegate Samuel I. Rosenberg

Before the Economic Matters Committee

In Support of

House Bill 0882

Business Regulation – Sale of Motor Fuel – Pricing Signage

(Gas Price Gouging Act)

Mister Chairman and Members of the Committee:

Every day, Maryland residents drive into gas stations to fill their tanks so they can get to work, take their families to school, shop for food and other essentials, and generally participate in all kinds of activities.

They are acutely aware of the cost of gasoline, among other costs. When they see a gas station sign with an attractive low price, it is a beacon for them. Unfortunately, they often learn - as they insert their credit card into the pump - that the price is indeed higher for credit card use than for cash.

Approximately 90% of gas purchasers in Maryland paid for fuel using a credit or debit card last year. These are not isolated incidents, and consumers rightfully deserve transparency and fairness. Current law only requires the display of the cheapest gas price, which is always either the cash amount or the price with a car wash.

Building on the work in both Prince George's County and Montgomery County, which unanimously enacted "Gas Price Gouging" laws similar to this bill, and in Howard County this year, I introduced HB882, also introduced in the Senate by Senator Cheryl Kagan, to address this

issue statewide. HB882 would mandate gas stations to display the higher (usually credit/debit) price, or to display both the credit/debit and cash price prominently.

At the hearing in the Senate, an amendment was agreed upon and I am requesting the same amendment for HB882. It renames the bill "Gas Price Clarity Act," adds a preemption clause to ensure standard laws across Maryland, meaning that SB651 will supersede laws or rules in our counties, and adds a requirement that if a gas station owner decides to display both the credit/debit price AND the cash price (pg.3, ln.6), the credit/debt price numerals may not be smaller than the "cash price" numerals.

Maryland would join 10 other states, California (2017), Connecticut (2011), Delaware(2010), Georgia (2010), Louisiana (1990), Massachusetts (2013), Michigan (2012), Minnesota (1994), New Jersey (2012), and South Dakota (1992) as well as New York City (2013), in protecting consumers from this deceptive practice.

For the above reasons, I urge a favorable report on HB882.