

REGINA T. BOYCE  
Legislative District 43A  
Baltimore City

—  
Vice Chair  
Environment and  
Transportation Committee

Subcommittees  
Housing and Real Property

Chair  
Natural Resources, Agriculture  
and Open Space



Annapolis Office  
The Maryland House of Delegates  
6 Bladen Street, Room 251  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401  
410-841-3476 · 301-858-3476  
800-492-7122 Ext. 3476  
Fax 410-841-3295 · 301-858-3295  
Regina.Boyce@house.state.md.us

THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

January 25, 2024

RE: Testimony **HB2 Baltimore City - Property Taxes - Authority to Set a Special Rate for Vacant and Abandoned Property**

Good afternoon, Chair Atterbeary, Vice Chair Wilkens and Members of the Ways and Means Committee.

For the record, I am Delegate Regina T. Boyce, representing District 43A, here to present **HB2— Baltimore City - Property Taxes - Authority to Set a Special Rate for Vacant and Abandoned Property**.

HB2 gives Baltimore City the authority to establish special property tax rates for vacant or improved properties, effective from June 30, 2024.

The essence of this bill lies in empowering the City to address the pressing issue of burdensome vacant and blighted properties strategically. The City of Baltimore incurs approximately \$100 million in direct costs due to vacant properties, with 13,000 properties rendered uninhabitable.

A critical aspect of this legislation is its potential to compel property owners to take decisive action. Some property owners hold on to vacant and blighted properties, in anticipation of an increase in their neighborhood's property value. Paradoxically, this practice diminishes the overall value of the community. HB2 aims to break this cycle by pressuring property owners to either rehabilitate, rent, or sell their properties.

As an example, Washington DC's special tax rate of 5% for vacant and 10% for blighted properties. Currently, Baltimore taxes all properties at 2.248%. In Baltimore City, the existing property tax rate for vacant and blighted properties remains the same as residential and commercial properties. However, due to the depreciation of property value, owners of vacant and blighted properties end up paying minimal taxes or none at all. This places an undue burden on residents and businesses paying the highest tax rate in the state to sustain the City's tax base.

I thank the Committee for their time and consideration in support of HB2.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Regina T. Boyce".

Regina T. Boyce