

Delegate Vanessa E. Atterbeary  
Ways and Means Committee, Chairwoman  
130 Taylor House Office Building  
131 Taylor house Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

March 10, 2025

Joseph Di Seta  
Baltimore, MD 21224  
410-370-9747

RE: HB 1508 - Baltimore City - Sales Tax - Authorization

POSITION: UNFAVORABLE

Dear Chairman Wilson,

I hope this message finds you well. While I was unable to submit written testimony in time, I am sending this letter personally to express my firm opposition to HB1508. As a lifelong resident of Baltimore City, a dedicated community leader, and board chair of the Baltimore Family Alliance, a local nonprofit, I believe it's crucial to voice my concerns regarding the potential impact of this legislation on the city's families, its future, and its economy.

In 2015, my wife and I faced a difficult decision when we welcomed our third child: we considered leaving Baltimore due to space limitations. After carefully weighing the pros and cons, we chose to make minor renovations to our home and remain in the city, believing in the unique qualities that make Baltimore such a wonderful place to raise our children. Yes, property taxes are high, but we stayed because of the vibrant community, the strong educational support, and the resources that our city offers, from beautiful parks to excellent restaurants.

As chair of the Baltimore Family Alliance, my mission is clear – to connect and empower families within the city. Our organization provides free resources and vital support to help families navigate life in Baltimore, with the ultimate goal of keeping them here until their children graduate high school. This work is more important now than ever, as we fight to keep families rooted in Baltimore amidst growing challenges.

I am deeply troubled by Mayor Scott's request to introduce a 2% sales tax in Baltimore City, on top of the existing 6% state sales tax. To call this proposal burdensome is an understatement. It not only adds another layer of financial strain on already struggling families, but it also places an additional tax burden on the very people who are working hard to make Baltimore their home.

What is particularly misleading is the suggestion from the Mayor that this additional 2% would come from the state's existing sales tax. This is unequivocally inaccurate. The reality is that this tax would fall squarely on the shoulders of Baltimoreans—many of whom are already facing significant challenges due to the rising cost of living and economic pressures from the results of

inept leadership in Washington. The last thing our city needs is another tax burden that makes it even harder for families to stay and thrive in Baltimore.

As a lifelong resident, I can tell you that people stay in Baltimore because of its strong sense of community. We have neighborhoods full of heart and spirit, places where families can grow and flourish together. But when it becomes prohibitively expensive to live and raise children here, those families will leave. This sales tax will only accelerate that exodus. As a community leader, I can confidently say that this would make my job at Baltimore Family Alliance much harder, as I work to convince families that staying in Baltimore is the best choice for their children's future.

This is a time when we should be focusing on measures that make Baltimore more affordable, not less. Imposing an additional sales tax will disproportionately impact those who can least afford it, and it will make it even more difficult for families to stay in the city and build a future here.

I strongly urge you to oppose this legislation and to stand with the hardworking families of Baltimore who are already feeling the pressure. Thank you for your time, your consideration, and your unwavering commitment to serving the residents of Maryland.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joseph Di Seta". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Joseph" and last name "Di Seta" clearly distinguishable.

Joseph Di Seta  
Chair, Baltimore Family Alliance  
[www.baltimorefamilies.org](http://www.baltimorefamilies.org)