

Senate Bill 328 Testimony

Good afternoon. Thank you for taking your valuable time to hear my testimony today. My name is Min Cha and I am the owner of Aloha Tokyo located on the 1200 block of North Charles Street in the diverse and vibrant Mount Vernon. I am here today to request the approval for the exchange of the Class “B” license to the Class B-D-7 license.

As a fellow Baltimore native, my family and I have owned and operated Aloha for over 12 years now. Currently, Aloha leases a continuous space of 6,682 square feet in the Mount Vernon Community. Due to its historical nature, the space we lease has two doors but is one entity in itself. We have been compliant with semi-annual inspections with the liquor board, and health department. In addition, Aloha is in good standing with the State Department of Assessments & Taxation and state regulations. We believe if we are approved the exchange to a Class B-D-7 license this will not disturb the neighborhood nor pose a hazard to the health, safety and welfare of the residents in this area.

Most importantly, we have maintained a safe environment for our customers and believe our business has found its home in Mount Vernon. We are a small part of Mt. Vernon’s diverse community and have long become a part of the large LGBTQ community. Aloha celebrates in the annual Gay Pride Festival and Artscape. We have gained the reputation as a safe haven for Mt. Vernon residents as well as neighboring communities in Charles Village and Bolton Hill. We have received an outpour of support from its community, represented in over 400 signatures from Mt. Vernon residents, voters, property owners and students. I think it would be safe to say that Mt. Vernon has also found their home in Aloha.

As a women-led business owner as well as a first-generation Korean, I am one of a few in Mount Vernon and in Baltimore City. I believe it is important to support minority-owned businesses that “promote the common good and general welfare of the community,” as Mount Vernon Belvedere Improvement Association states in their own by-laws. Further stating from their by-laws, Aloha is trying to demonstrate “growth and revitalization.” We only hope that Mount Vernon Belvedere Improvement Association allows us to grow and strengthen within the community and welcomes Aloha Tokyo to do so with **Senate Bill 0328**.