

**Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 688: Sales and Use and Vehicle Excise Taxes –
Peer-to-Peer Car Sharing**

February 17th, 2021

Dear Chairperson Guzzone and Members of the Budget and Taxation Committee,

I am a student currently studying at Morgan State University, one of Maryland's four esteemed HBCUs. I am writing to you today to express my support for **SB 688**. Myself and many of my fellow students recognize that our Universities are not being provided adequate funding, especially in relation to other State Universities. For decades, schools like mine have been undervalued and treated unfairly by the University of Maryland System. Even after the courts proved what we already knew to be true, and the Maryland General Assembly passed legislation to rectify the injustice HBCUs in this state experienced, we are still being told we don't matter by the Governor's veto citing inadequate funding.

Contrary to this, we have been made aware that the State of Maryland takes an annual \$50-65 million dollar loss in revenue due to a titling tax exemption provided for huge car rental corporations. It is unconscionable that the State of Maryland would provide millions of dollars in tax exemptions to large companies whilst claiming it does not have the funds to devote to students like myself who have been undervalued for years. Those exemptions should be eliminated and those funds should be dedicated to funding HBCUs as outlined in the legislation passed last year. As a product of Maryland public schools from kindergarten until the present day, I have seen firsthand how the state prioritizes businesses and corporations over the education and resources that it provides to institutions that serve persons of color and/or low-income families. It is disheartening to see the disparities that we are faced with in order to get an education. Historically Black Colleges and Universities provide a safe space to learn and grow for students of various ethnicities and cultures. HBCUs are able to build leaders of the future with the resources that they are afforded now. But with funding that we deserve, the possibilities are limitless.

It is time that Maryland begins prioritizing education and equity over big business. If passed, this legislation will send a message to students all over the state like myself that our education matters. Maryland HBCUs are responsible for thousands of graduates, employees, and have a massive impact on our economy and society. It is time that our Universities receive the funding that it is entitled to. Morgan State University serves as a pillar of the Baltimore community and the state of Maryland at large. It is a home away from home to thousands of students across the world. This institution provides so much more to its students beyond academia. It instills a sense of pride, belonging, and ambition to every soul that it touches. I am so glad to attend Morgan

State and to have experienced what it has to offer. I am excited to see what the future holds for my illustrious institution and hope that more students are able to do so as well.

I respectfully request a favorable report on **SB 688**.

Sincerely,

Kennedy Corley

Kennedy Corley
Morgan State University