

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak.

My name is Steven Franco, I am a business owner and a property owner in Seat Pleasant, Md. I have been doing business in Prince Georges County, Md. for 45 years, 30 of those years in Oxon Hill. My store is Discount Mart. We provide goods and services at discount prices. We are especially known for school uniforms.

As you know the personal property tax rate in Seat Pleasant is 15% while the State of Maryland's average is 1%. This puts an undue burden on business in The City forcing some to leave. I know first hand regarding Advanced Auto's departure. They broke their lease. I was told by their landlord that " They had enough of The Government of Seat Pleasant"

Another aspect of Seat Pleasant's tax rate is it includes inventory. Most jurisdictions exempt inventory. CVS's tax bill includes tax on medicine and prescription drugs. Food is taxed in Seat Pleasant.

Regarding my business. This is difficult for us as we continue to struggle to keep prices down for our customers, many who are residents of The City. Ultimately they pay with higher prices to cover the tax.

Seat Pleasant is a good place to do business however the posture of the current administration is outright hostile to the business community. We have been pleading with them for 4 years with many business owners appearing at Council meetings.

The City's posture along with the tax rate will continue to stifle economic growth and development in Seat Pleasant.

I understand that The City opposes this legislation as it may have an adverse financial impact, however they caused this by gross government overreach and fiscal mismanagement. If they cannot sustain it, I recommend The City to be placed in a State receivership similar to what happened in The District of Columbia about 30 years ago. There was an appointed oversight board that brought DC back to fiscal stability.

I made an investment in Seat Pleasant, I bought a blight property, renovated it and opened a business, that serves the community. I've done me part. Please do yours.

Thank You,
Steven Franco
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