



Neighborhood Housing Services of Baltimore, Inc.

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Delegate Vanessa E. Atterbeary, Chair
Ways and Means Committee
House Office Building Room 131
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: House Bill 1196

Honorable Chair Atterbeary and Members of the Committee:

I am the Executive Director of Neighborhood Housing Services of Baltimore (NHS), and a resident of Baltimore City. Our organization believes that economic and social justice are a right for all people and communities. We promote this belief by removing barriers of access to homeownership, helping resident access resources to maintain their homes, and supporting communities historically impacted by systemic disinvestment.

As part of our work helping residents remain in their homes, we support families impacted by tax sale. For the past 10 years we have advocated for changes to the existing tax sale system. I was recently appointed by Mayor Scott a co-chair of the Baltimore City Tax Sale Work Group charged with creating an equitable system for revenue collection. Legislation is expected in future years. HB1196 is enabling legislation allowing local jurisdictions to set up payment plans for collections and to withhold properties from tax sale if they are enrolled in a payment plan. Under current law the homeowner would need to complete payment prior to the tax sale cut off. The timing doesn't work for most residents since they would be entering into the plan in the months leading up to the sale. In successful tax sale models around the country payment plans are a critical element to support low-income residents in retaining their homes. HB1196 adds that authority in Maryland in is critical in supporting residents. We recognize that much more is needed to bring equity to the tax sale system in Maryland and are committed to continuing working together to identify those solutions. HB1196 is a positive step in helping Maryland families remain in their homes.

We ask that the Committee issue a *favorable* report on HB 1196 as we continue to work on ways to reform the tax sale system as a whole,

Sincerely,

Daniel T. Ellis
Executive Director

