



Odette Ramos

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Testimony

HB310 Baltimore City - Property Taxes - Authority to set Special Rates

Position: Favorable

Madame Chair and Members of the Ways and Means Committee:

I am writing to urge you to vote a favorable report for HB310 - Baltimore City - Property Taxes - Authority to Set Special Rates.

Currently, all of Baltimore's properties are set at the same tax rate. While it is easier to do the assessments and billing, it is not equitable. Setting rates for different types of property will allow us the flexibility for many of our policies that will help our neighborhoods, while also bringing in necessary revenues for our city. For instance, we could set rates for legacy residents who are in neighborhoods that are redeveloping to ensure they can stay. We could also set a rate for much higher taxes on vacant and abandoned properties.

Many cities across the US have differential property tax rate systems. According to a 2020 study by the Lincoln Institute of Tax Policy and the Minnesota Center for Fiscal Excellence, of the 100 cities' property tax rates they studied, 53 of them have differential property tax systems.

In Cities like Washington DC who can set their property tax rates for various types of properties, they have used creative strategies to address gentrification, encourage redevelopment of vacant properties, and more. Baltimore City really needs such a tool.

This is an opportunity we should not pass up, and I look forward to working with our City Council to use this new tool strategically and effectively. Thanks to Delegate Boyce for her leadership on this important issue.

Please vote a favorable report for HB310.

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you have any questions. I can be reached on 410-396-4814 or via email at odette.ramos@baltimorecity.gov.

Respectfully Submitted:

Odette Ramos

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