

March 3, 2023

5606 26th Avenue
Hyattsville, MD 20782

Chairman Kumar Barve
Environment and Transportation Committee
251 House Office Building
6 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401-1912

Dear Chairman Barve,

It is an honor to be before this esteemed body. My name is Marina Sanchez. I am a mother of 3 who was married for 25 years to a person with a dominant and manipulative character who controlled my mind and actions with fear. It took me 20 years to learn how to drive. I was a victim of verbal and sexual abuse during my marriage. Additionally, he would force me to not take independent contractor jobs, forcing me to lose out on job opportunities. Thus, I just earned about \$15,000 a year. This is all I have made annually for over 15 years.

Furthermore, he would never provide me with money for transportation, the kids, house, or anything that he wouldn't deem necessary causing me to go into a substantial amount of debt to provide for my family. Meanwhile, he has a successful business, with 3 cars, with a significant 6 figure income and multiple houses. Due to the fact I was trying to maintain a roof over my family's head, and a peaceful environment in the home, he was able to claim my kids on his taxes, not allowing me to claim them, in turn losing out on money that could have been used to help them.

He took away so much of my liberty in those 25 years. Then I finally decided to go to marriage counseling, and eventually a psychologist, eventually guiding me to leave my abuser 2 years ago with my 13-year-old son. Since leaving, my ex-partner has not given me a single dollar for my son or paid the property taxes for the house, which was the only thing I really requested of him. I didn't realize he was the one receiving all the mail, therefore I didn't realize I owed over \$10,000 in property taxes for the last 2 years putting my home in a vulnerable position of a tax sale. Only by coincidence did I find out that my property had been sold due to lack of property tax payment.

I reached out to my local elected officials for help last year. Thanks to Delegate Taveras, we were able to ask the tax sale lawyer to hold on the eviction until we found a solution. Because my property does not have a mortgage, I was able to get assisted through the Homeowner's Assistance Fund. HAF was able to cover almost \$20k in property tax arrears, legal fees, interest, and penalties due. However, if I had a mortgage and/or owed utilities, my child and I would have been homeless or without power or heat due to the lack of cooperation from my soon-to-be ex-husband. **The Homeowner's Assistance Funds requires that all title and utility account owners in need of mortgage and utility assistance, respectfully, provide their taxes and financial information, even if they do not reside in the home. It is because of this that I ask for your favorable report of HB 1073 so others in my situation don't have to fear homelessness or be forced to return to their abuser.**

Since that I have left him, I have bloomed, and I feel like a whole new empowered, entrepreneurial woman with agency to see a brighter future for myself, with an opportunity to change my 13-year-old child's view on what a healthy relationship should look like.

Thank you in advance for your favorable report of HB 1073.

Sincerely,

Marina Sanchez