

Greetings Chairman and Members of the Committee,

I want to thank Delegate Steve Johnson and my childhood friend Delegate Andre Johnson, for this opportunity to show my support for House Bill 688.

In 1981, my dad was stationed at Aberdeen Proving Ground-Edgewood Arsenal and at the age of 9, Edgewood became my primary residence until my graduation from Edgewood High School. Edgewood, the largest city in Harford County, with approximately 25k people, is a community of diverse socioeconomic demographics where everybody knows your name and shares a common bond with neighboring Joppatowne. Edgewood/Joppatowne has numerous national businesses and/or distribution centers such as Kohl's, Amazon, Macy's, U.S. Lumber, and Zenith, which generate one of the largest commercial tax-based revenue sources in Harford County. In addition, Edgewood has approximately 12 hotels while Aberdeen/Havre De Grace, both municipalities, has approximately 24 hotels. However, Edgewood retains a small percentage of the hotel tax revenue while Aberdeen/Havre De Grace retains much larger.

Moving forward to 2006, my pregnant wife, 6-year-old daughter, and I moved to Waldorf a few months before my first of two military deployments. Like Edgewood/Joppatowne, Waldorf is a community of diverse socioeconomic demographics where everybody may not know your name but is home to Charles County's largest tax revenue source, mainly from property taxes. Likewise, there are no major tourist/recreational attractions despite at least 15 years of public demands for these basic amenities. As Edgewood, Waldorf has approximately 13 hotels with very little revenue staying in Waldorf, yet is the largest city in Charles County, 4th largest city in MD, and recognized as the wealthiest Black County in the U.S. with an estimated population of 85k people.

Unfairly, some label Edgewood, Joppatowne, and Waldorf as too hood, crime-infested, over-crowded, or poor while those same people have no problem reaping the tax revenue benefits continuously sucked out of Edgewood, Joppatowne, and Waldorf.

This is why I support HB688. Residents of unincorporated cities deserve to have more power and control by electing officials who reside in their cities. This will hold elected officials directly accountable to the people and provide residents an opportunity to lobby for basic amenities such as businesses offering livable wages, federal Government agencies/contractors, live music/entertainment venues, a sports complex and/or outside & lighted basketball-skateboard courts. If we say we are a democracy then let's start by hearing AND listening to the voices of the people, support HB688.

Respectfully submitted,

Derrick Terry

Waldorf, MD Resident (2006-present)

Edgewood, MD Former Resident (1981-1995) "Once WOOD Always WOOD"