



Connecting Individuals and Families who need Civil Legal Services with Volunteer Attorneys and Community Resources

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Timothy Abeska, Esq.
Holland Brownley, Esq.
Rebecca Burner
Sarah Dahl, Esq.
Rosemary Ramsey Granillo
Tawes Harper
Hillary Lindeman
James McComb
Dr. Clinton Pettus
Anthony Rodriguez, Esq.
Judith Showalter, Esq.
Michael Starling
Ruth Thomas
Samantha Bowers Welte
Doncella Wilson

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Meredith L. Girard, Esq.

499 Idlewild Avenue, Suite 102
EASTON, MARYLAND 21601
PHONE: 410-690-8128
FAX: 443-385-0210

601-B Naylor Mill Road
SALISBURY, MD 21802
PHONE: 410.690.8128

WWW.MIDSHOREPROBONO.ORG

HB 236: TAX SALES – STATE TAX SALE OMBUDSMAN – OUTREACH CAMPAIGN

HEARING BEFORE THE HOUSE WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE

FEBRUARY 7, 2023

POSITION: SUPPORT

Mid-Shore Pro Bono (MSPB) recommends a favorable report for HB236. We support this bill because direct outreach to homeowners in tax sale would help to prevent tax foreclosures and empower people to gather the resources needed to keep their homes.

MSPB is a Maryland nonprofit that connects people on the Eastern Shore with limited financial means to legal representation and essential community resources. Each year, MSPB helps over 3,000 people in our community access the legal system in times of need. Our network of volunteer lawyers provides free legal services for elder law, family law, landlord/tenant, foreclosure, and consumer debt. These services help families gain financial and housing stability and create safe, secure homes for children.

MSPB assists over 350 Eastern Shore residents every year with housing issues, including tax foreclosure. The people in our community who are most at risk of tax foreclosure are older adults with limited income and financial resources, people with disabilities such as cognitive and mental health challenges, and people who do not have a mortgage, but lack enough collective financial resources to manage their annual tax bill. The reality is the too often, families lose their homes over a tax bill that is relatively small compared to the equity in their home. Clients who come to our organization early enough in the process are often able to avoid tax foreclosure by taking advantage of some of the excellent programs Maryland provides to assist (such as the Maryland Homeowners Tax Credit). Clients also sometimes contact us after learning that their property has already been sold in a tax sale and never received notice. This bill will provide needed outreach to homeowners in danger of losing their homes thereby empowering them to resolve their tax situation.

For these reasons, Mid-Shore Pro Bono urges the Committee's support for HB236. If you have any questions regarding our position on this bill, please contact Meredith Lathbury Girard, Esq., executive director, at 410-690-8128 or mgirard@midshoreprobono.org.