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**Maryland House Ways & Means Committee
Thursday, February 9, 2023**

Bill Number: HB 187 – Sales and Use Tax – Secondhand Apparel – Exemption

Position: Favorable

**Andres Gonzalez
District Manager
Savers Value Village**

Thank you, Chair Atterbeary and members of the Committee.

I am Andres Gonzalez, and I am proud to be a District Manager for Savers in Maryland. I previously worked for 2nd Avenue, the thrift retailer that Savers acquired in 2021 as part of the company's commitment to growing in Maryland. Being part of Savers has been really positive – we have great teams, a strong benefits package, and our company has a commitment to training, developing talent, promotion from within, and an inclusive, diverse workforce.

Across the five stores that I oversee, I am really proud of our team members. I manage five store managers, each of whom has approximately 100 other management roles and team members in their stores.

Each week, each of our stores may merchandise more than 60,000 items. The fact that the merchandise in our stores is bought from local nonprofits



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and kept out of landfills is something that motivates our team members and gives purpose to their work.

As James mentioned, we have customers who come into our stores for many reasons.

We have loyal customers who are committed to buying secondhand for environmental reasons – they don't want to buy new and they are looking carefully at their “clothing footprint,” as we call it.

Many others are there for the thrill of the treasure hunt. With so many fresh items on our sales floor every day, you never know what you will find – and I could tell you stories!

And of course, we also have customers who come to us because they need high-quality, low priced essential clothing, shoes and household items. To the diverse group of customers in this category, I can say that making items of \$20 or less sales tax free will make a really big difference to their household budgets. A dollar here or a dollar there truly matters to many of our shoppers, so this bill will make a difference to them however small the impact may seem to many in this room.

Thank you for considering this legislation. For those of us who live in the thrift world every day – keeping reusable items out of landfills, supporting our teams, and helping both our environmental and price conscious customers



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find high-quality, affordable essential items – it is exciting to see the Maryland Assembly looking for positive ways to spread the word about reuse while helping consumers.

Thank you.