

Testimony – SB 356
Christine Horn (PATH, ACT and AIM)

Good afternoon, my name is Tina Horn, and I am a member of the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Columbia, but I am here today representing People Acting Together in Howard (PATH), Action In Montgomery (AIM), and Anne Arundel Connecting Together (ACT). Together we are more than 65 congregations and schools representing tens of thousands of Maryland residents. Together we have won over \$1.5 Billion dollars for affordable housing and have consistently pushed for and won more affordable housing in places like downtown Columbia, and in many neighborhoods and communities across Howard, Montgomery, and Anne Arundel Counties over the past 20 years.

My son is a college student at the University of Maryland in College Park intending a life of public service and I do not know how he will be able to afford to live in our community once he graduates. Teachers, firefighters, nurses, and young government employees cannot afford rent, much less saving up for a house. Our congregation and our neighboring congregations have many senior citizen members who are eager to downsize and move into a smaller space, but the housing is not available to them. Having high quality and affordable housing so close to our faith communities would be a significant lift for both seniors seeking simplification and youth seeking independence because it would enable connection for both groups.

SB356 could make a significant difference for the thousands of people each year who share with us that they and their families need access to affordable housing. Many of our member congregations are struggling to make ends meet but do land and want to use their resources to give back to the community and support their neighbors who are seniors, or young adults, or public employees or disabled and just can't afford the housing prices in our communities. Being able to build affordable housing on their properties is a win-win for congregations to live into their values and have financial security into the future.

Many places like Montgomery County, Virginia, and California that are either considering or who have already supported legislation like Senate Bill 356. On behalf of PATH, AIM, and ACT, and our 65 member congregations, we urge you to support it in Maryland!