

Grimaldi Legal

7100 Brockway Dr, Fort Washington, MD 20744
www.grimaldilegal.com
202-240-2538

Andrew J. Grimaldi, Attorney
andrew@grimaldilegal.com
Licensed in Maryland

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Re: In favor of House Bill 266

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen of the State of Maryland Legislature:

My name is Andrew Grimaldi, and I appreciate the opportunity to submit this written testimony in support of House Bill 266. As a volunteer attorney concentrating on common ownership management and legal issues in Prince George's County for the past five years, I have witnessed the challenges faced by low-income unit owners and Boards of Directors in condominium associations. I strongly believe that the proposed provisions in House Bill 266 can address crucial issues and significantly benefit the state of Maryland.

One of the primary concerns I have encountered is the limited authority and tools at the disposal of the Maryland Consumer Protection Division, which often renders their involvement weak and ineffective. House Bill 266 addresses this issue by proposing to grant the Consumer Protection Division the authority to take direct enforcement action when abuses of law or regulation are identified. This is particularly important in cases where negligent board members exploit their authority, making it challenging for individual unit owners to hold them accountable to statutes, regulations, and bylaws. Strengthening the Consumer Protection Division's enforcement capabilities will provide essential support to communities grappling with such challenges.

The second key provision in House Bill 266 involves mandatory training for the governing body and community managers. Having undergone a required training program in Montgomery County, I can attest to the positive impact of such training. Extending a mandatory training requirement statewide is crucial to ensuring that elected board members and community managers have a comprehensive understanding of their rights and obligations. This will contribute to a more transparent and accountable governance structure, benefiting both unit owners and community associations.

I am particularly enthusiastic about the positive impact these two provisions can have on common ownership communities across Maryland. By empowering the Consumer Protection Division and implementing mandatory training, House Bill 266 has the potential to address existing challenges and promote responsible and informed condominium management.

In conclusion, I urge the committee to support and pass House Bill 266. This legislation is a crucial step towards fostering accountability, transparency, and a more harmonious living environment for all Maryland residents living in common ownership communities.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Andrew Grimaldi

Andrew Grimaldi, Esq.