

TESTIMONY – HB 1358

Anita Cathcart

Greetings to the Maryland General Assembly members, and legislators.

As a young girl, my parents made it a point to enjoy the surroundings of our community such as Gwynns Falls – Leakin Park. As a 61-year resident of the Allendale Community located along the Edmondson Village corridor, we attended the park on many occasions back in the day, to include picnics in the summer, general family and friends outings, sledding down the hills and building snowmen in the winter, and attending community events that were held there for a variety of reasons.

My fondest memory is the Historic Water Wheel nestled in the center-most area of the Park. It was used to pump water to the Orianda House located in the park. Although it was not operational at the time, I always wanted to take pictures at the wheel when we visited. It was a nice landmark to us.

We knew how valuable the park was to us because back in the 1930s, 40s and 50s, before I was born, Black families were either not allowed, or it was frowned upon to attend certain parks in the city. We treasured our Park, because it was less than 10 minutes from our home, which made it easy for my parents to transport six kids, as well as saving on fuel. We had no idea (back then) that the Park would end up in the shape that it is in now.

My intention is to bring as many residents as possible to come along for the ride to help refurbish, renew and regenerate families to support the HB 1358, to restore its natural beauty and to never again let this beautiful edifice of God fall to the wayside. I support this Bill and the efforts put forth by Delegate Malcolm Ruff, my 41 State Legislative Delegate to reengage and reenergize our city, state, and Baltimore residents to provide necessary funding for our Park.