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Testimony in SUPPORT of SB 859 – Fair Share for Maryland Act of 2025

Presented to the Budget and Taxation Committee

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My name is Jessica Libowitz and I am a resident in 5th Council District of Baltimore City, the 41st State Legislative District, and the 3rd Congressional District. Thank you, to whom it may concern **I am submitting this testimony in support of SB 859, the Fair Share for Maryland Act of 2025.**

As a clinical social worker working alongside families across Baltimore, I see the need for increased investment and funding in communities across Baltimore. We need more affordable housing development and investment in public transportation. We need to continue to invest in the Blueprint to support equitable school funding. In order to pay for these things, we need to raise funds. While Governor Moore's current budget proposal does include some positive steps forward, there is more that needs to be done.

Routinely, I work alongside families who are impacted by chronic disinvestment. The number one reason why folks seek assistance from my agency is for rental support, as there is a significant lack of affordable housing. Families I work with are routinely impacted by our outdated and underfunded public transit system, either taking hours long by transit or unable to reach their job when their car breaks down. A majority of the families we partner with are connected to community schools and the proposed budget sees critical cuts to education funding. Given my role in supporting the mental health needs of students and families, I am deeply troubled by the proposed \$116 million cuts to mental health services, \$90 million of cuts which are coming from school mental health programs. We cannot in good conscience ask children to shoulder the impacts of the budget deficit. Through the measures outlined in SB 859, we would be able to raise funds without seeking cuts to vital public programs and burdening the majority of taxpayers who are already paying more than their fair share.

Anticipating decreased federal funding under the current administration is all the more reason for a robust proposal to raise revenue in Maryland. While the challenges we face are significant and will require concerted effort, we cannot continue to ask Maryland families to be burdened by budget shortfalls and while the wealthiest people and corporations in Maryland do not pay their fair share. It is for these reasons that I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on SB 859.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jessica Libowitz