

Dear Chairman Korman and Members of the Committee,

As a Black Maryland resident, I am writing to express my strong support for HB-1184, which ensures the preservation of Snow Hill, one of Maryland's earliest free Black communities, in a way that respects its historical significance and the voices of those it represents.

Snow Hill was a thriving pre-Civil War free Black settlement, home to 47 lots with houses, stores, and Bethel AME Church, a vital center for faith and education. It represents a powerful legacy of Black self-determination and resilience that must be protected and honored.

Unfortunately, misinformation has wrongly linked Snow Hill to the Jacob Tome School, a segregated institution that excluded Black students. Some have framed this connection as positive, but for many, it is a painful reminder of past injustices.

HB-1184 provides the right solution by ensuring that:

- Snow Hill's history stands on its own, rather than being overshadowed.
- Maryland's resources are used wisely, focusing state preservation efforts on Snow Hill, while allowing the Bainbridge Development Corporation and the Town of Port Deposit to manage the Tome School separately.
- Restoration efforts move forward efficiently, ensuring this important history is preserved in a timely manner.

Snow Hill's story is not just a local issue—it is a Maryland story, a Black history story, and a national legacy that deserves to be told with truth and integrity.

I urge you to vote YES on HB-1184.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Karen Verdell

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