

The Honorable Ben Barnes
Chair, Appropriations Committee
Maryland House of Delegates
6 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD. 21401

RE: HB1581 Horse Racing-Facility Ownership, Development, Licensing, and Operations-
Alterations

Position: Favorable with Amendments

Dear Chair Barnes and Members of the Committee:

My name is Elizabeth Wiseman. I have lived in Park Heights since the 1960s. I raised my children here, and I remain an active community leader today. I have seen this neighborhood when it was strong, when it struggled, and now — thankfully — as it begins to thrive again.

I was one of the community leaders who testified during the original hearings on House Bill 1524. At that time, many of us came forward with one clear message: if Pimlico was going to be rebuilt, the surrounding community must share in that success. We were told this redevelopment would be different. We were told that it would include real, sustained community investment.

For many years, Pimlico operated in our community without direct contributions flowing back into the neighborhoods around it. The 10% provision represented a meaningful change. It was a recognition that redevelopment should benefit the families, seniors, and small businesses that have lived beside the racetrack for generations.

The 10% annual net income distribution is not symbolic — it is essential. It supports housing investments, home repair grants for seniors, workforce development, job training, homeownership opportunities, redevelopment of vacant and blighted properties, safety enhancements, and community beautification. These are not luxuries. These are foundational needs.

- Our seniors need help staying in the homes they built their lives in.
- Our neighborhoods need better lighting and safer streets.
- Our Main Streets need revitalization, new stores, and walkable improvements.
- Our children need enrichment programs and safe spaces.
- Our families need opportunities to build wealth through homeownership.

We have participated in years of community planning and visioning. We have imagined what a transformed Park Heights can look like a cleaner, safer, more walkable community with thriving businesses and stable housing. We are finally beginning to see progress, and continued investment is necessary to sustain that momentum.

I want to thank the Administration for restoring the 10% provision in the legislation. We were concerned when it was removed, because to our community it represents a promise. We appreciate that this correction is being made.

It is also important that the community's share reflects revenue from all activities taking place at the Pimlico site — not only racing, but sports wagering, events, and any other revenue-generating activities. If Pimlico succeeds as a multi-use facility, the surrounding community should share proportionally in that success.

Park Heights is a large and historic community. The needs are significant, but so is the opportunity. Anchor institutions such as Park Heights Renaissance and CHAI are helping coordinate investments and ensure accountability. They are helping us understand the true costs of redevelopment and what it takes to move from vision to implementation.

The 10% provision ensures that the success of Pimlico is directly connected to the success of the community around it.

I respectfully urge you to preserve and protect this provision so that the commitments made to our community are honored and the progress we are seeing can continue.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

Elizabeth Wiseman

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