

## Testimony for HB 1149 (UNFAVORABLE)

### **The McDonald Mandate: Accountability, Not Just Settlements**

#### **To Chair Guy Guzzone and the Members of the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee:**

My name is Nicole McDonald. I am a candidate for Delegate in District 45, and I am here to offer a reality check on HB 1149. While the Comptroller seeks efficiency in settling state claims, I am here to ensure that "efficiency" doesn't become a "get out of jail free card" for those who are currently harming our community.

#### **1. No Settlements for Failing Vendors (The Accountability Provision)**

HB 1149 repeals the two-year waiting period for debt settlements. I support moving faster, but only if we move *fairly*. We cannot allow this bill to benefit private vendors who have a track record of stripping services from our system. As we see in **SB 742 (The Protecting People with Disabilities Act)**, our families are being procedurally disenrolled and losing lifelines. No debt should be settled or reduced for any vendor that has been penalized for service failures or is currently under investigation for stripping services from Maryland families.

#### **2. The Community Reinvestment Rule (The Winston Amendment)**

When the state recovers money or settles a claim, that money often disappears into the General Fund while the harm to the neighborhood remains. I propose a **Community Reinvestment Amendment**: A mandated percentage of funds recovered from settlements with health and human service vendors must be directed into a **Community Repair Fund**. These funds should be used to restore the very resources—like vocational training and food access—lost when these vendors failed.

#### **3. Stop the Waste: Use the Tools We Have**

We don't need to spend more money on new administrative layers or higher salaries for officials (**HB 607**). We have the **Central Collection Unit (CCU)** and the **Comptroller's Office**. My mandate is simple: **Implement the laws we already have**. Those in charge must answer for why they let services get stripped while they ask for more budget to manage the decline. As Governor Moore says, "Accountability is not a suggestion—it is a requirement." We need to see that accountability applied to the leaders who let these debts pile up in the first place.

#### **Conclusion**

Do not just "clear the books" for the state; clear a path for the recovery of our communities. Let's make sure that justice is meted out equally—where a vendor doesn't get a "slick" settlement while a disabled child in District 45 loses their care.

**Respectfully Submitted,**

**By Authority of: Nichole McDonald for District 45 Lonetta Mason, Treasurer**