

Good afternoon, and thank you for giving me the opportunity to testify today. My name is Noah Black. I'm a resident of the city of Kensington, lifelong resident of Maryland, and I am here today alongside the Maryland Just Power Alliance to support Bill SB036.

Recently, I got engaged. With my fiancée and I both in our mid-20s, it's clear that the rest of our lives could be dictated by the things that are happening here and now. We talk about the family we want to raise together. We talk about the children we want to bring into this world. More than anything else, though, we talk of the communities we can give back to – the same ones that raised us both.

There's just one problem: we can't afford a house. Right now, my fiancée and I – like so many others – rent space with roommates. We don't have space for children. We don't have the stability a house of our own could bring. Come the end of our lease, we don't even have assurance we won't be priced out of this county entirely, and be forced to seek community somewhere else.

Without access to affordable housing, our futures are on pause. Bill SB036 will help prevent this, and let us do something so many others in this room have had before us – the chance to set down roots, to raise a family, and to give back. We don't need a half acre of land or a sprawling front lawn. Right now, we just need a house.

Thank you again for allowing me to speak, and I hope you keep us in mind when the time comes.