

Good afternoon. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to testify. My name is The Reverend Breonna T. Roberts and I live in Millersville, Maryland. I serve as pastor to Christ Evangelical Lutheran Church in Millersville, and I am a member of ACT and the Maryland Just Power Alliance. I am here to support Bill SB036/HB239. The dearth of affordable housing in Maryland is a specter affecting everyone in our state. I returned to Maryland in 2021 to take this position in my church. I live next door in a house owned by the church, as part of my compensation package. Without this benefit, I would be able to afford to live in Anne Arundel County close to my parishioners or my church would have to settle for a part-time leader they could afford. Likewise, in my congregation we have seen many families across socioeconomic backgrounds forced to make the decision between staying in Maryland where their networks of community are located or moving away to states with lower costs of living and more plentiful housing. We have seen at least four families in our small church move to states like South Carolina and Tennessee and that loss is Maryland's loss as well. This bill will make space for our communities to thrive through affordable and accessible housing. Thank you.