



Chair Brian Feldman
and Members, Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
2 West, Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

February 17, 2026

Senate Bill 36 – Starter and Silver Homes Act of 2026 – Favorable


Dear Chair Feldman and members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee:

My name is Dan Reed and I serve as the Maryland Policy Director for Greater Greater Washington, a nonprofit that supports better housing, land use, and transportation policies throughout Greater Washington and beyond. **GGWash strongly supports Senate Bill 36, the Starter and Silver Homes Act.**

The rationale for this bill is simple: we aren't building enough homes, prices have spiked in recent years, and our friends and loved ones are moving out. I bet most of us in this room, myself included, know someone who's moved to North Carolina because it's just too expensive in Maryland.

Our poll, released last week, found that **92% of Maryland voters say home prices are a problem**. It holds true all the way across political, demographic, and geographic margins: Democrats and Republicans, from the panhandle to the lower shore, from Baltimore to Bethesda. **Marylanders told us that they're putting off starting a family or saving for retirement because of housing costs.** They told us their local governments aren't doing a good job on this issue, and that **the state needs to step in.**

What this bill does is it sets common standards for our local jurisdictions so that they do not throw up arbitrary barriers to housing production. Chief among them is the requirement that homes come with a large lot, which not everyone wants or needs. But it does keep out people who did everything right, who got an education and a career, who want to see their kids or grandkids grow up here, who could afford a decent home without subsidies if a builder could build that house on a smaller lot, or as a duplex or townhome. The kind of homes this state produced by the thousands just a few decades ago, when my family came here from North Carolina and the Caribbean.

The Washington, DC region is great  and it can be greater.



Places that have done away with those mandates—Raleigh, North Carolina and Portland, Oregon are just two of them—have found that builders can and do deliver smaller, lower-priced homes that young families and downsizing seniors can access.

Not surprisingly, **two-thirds of Marylanders, across party lines, income brackets, and zip codes, told us they support the proposals in this bill.** You won't hear from many of them—and nor do our local governments—because they're too busy with their lives and families and careers. But they vote, and by a margin of three to one, said they're less likely to vote for legislators who don't support making smaller, more affordable homes easier to build.

This bill offers small changes that could make a big difference for families like yours and mine, and we urge the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee for a favorable report.

Sincerely,

Dan Reed
Maryland Policy Director