



HB 78

Property Taxes – Authority of Counties to Establish Subclasses and Set Separate Rates for Land and Improvements to Land

Hearing before the House Ways and Means Committee
Jan. 27, 2026

POSITION: Favorable

Community Law Center (CLC) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, which is a legal partner to Maryland neighborhoods and nonprofits in pursuit of more just and vibrant communities. CLC provides direct legal representation to communities and nonprofits on issues like tax exemption and organizational governance, real estate, contracts, intellectual property, employment law, and more. We advocate on issues that impact our Maryland neighborhood and nonprofit clients, including nuisance and vacant properties.

CLC supports HB 78 to give local governments the ability to set real property tax rates based on land and improvements to land. This will allow jurisdictions like Baltimore City, with significant numbers of vacant properties, to incentivize property owners to address blight and vacancy, by rewarding the improvement of property rather than allowing empty lots to sit vacant. Holding vacant property owners accountable by acknowledging the underlying market value of the land they hold will result in a fairer property tax system. This can potentially reduce property taxes for residents, as property taxes are assessed based on the value of land and improvements separately, allowing for more precise and market aligned assessment overall.

CLC supports HB 78. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

For the above reasons,
CLC urges a FAVORABLE VOTE ON HB 78.

Please contact Shana Roth-Gormley, Staff Attorney at Community Law Center, with any questions.
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