

SB0096/HB061 Tax Sales of Real Property Water Liens

The Problem

BRIDGE Maryland, Inc. sympathizes with Baltimore City government's trying to recover needed property and financial resources to fiscally manage a better quality of life for its residents. However, selling certain properties and places of worship to enforce a lien for unpaid charges for water and sewer service is excessive. Water and sewer are basic human necessities. The absence of either can result in a far graver health and environmental impact on the residences and places of worship.

Why It's Important to BMI

This issue is especially important to our members and places of worship because it is unlawful to have public gatherings without water and sewer utilities. Likewise, the life of most places of worship is to worship, plan and impact our communities with hope, encouragement and social services. We shouldn't be punished for a human necessity.

What We Commit To Do With Your Support

We ask that you support this bill and BRIDGE Maryland, Inc. will work with you and places of worship to develop plans to revitalize communities in Baltimore and to produce more revenues for the city to overcome the debt owed in exchange for debt forgiveness of current water and sewer bills. 1st Mount Calvary Baptist Church has already shown Maryland that citizens in Baltimore city care about their community and that they can provide, gardens, jobs and community markets to revive Baltimore. We are asking that you exercise the first biblical *jubilee* in Baltimore City.

SB0812/HB0451 Fair Housing Act 2019

The Problem

The Department of Justice issued a report after the Freddie Gray protest in Baltimore City that discrimination in housing is directly related to violence and concentrated poverty. We are sure that fact is probably national in scope. We also know that people are still, today, being discriminated against based on ethnicity, age, gender, etc. and this act would at least make it illegal to discriminate based on a person's legal source of income.

Why It's Important to BMI?

This is especially important to us because veterans, physically disabled, non-whites and people at or below the poverty level make up over 51% of our board members and over 40% of our members and associates at large. Discrimination based on source of income impacts our children's education, our quality of life and limits our choices in living in areas of opportunity as describe in this bill.

What We Commit To Do With Your Support

We ask that you support this bill and BRIDGE Maryland, Inc. will educate our members and coalition about areas of opportunity to assist in the de-concentration of poverty and we will work with our transportation taskforce to provide more transportation for job opportunities and connections to family that live in other locations. For example, Sister Mary wanted to live in a "place of opportunity" but her voucher was not accepted, and it would pose an issue being away from her support system (her extended family). After getting a better paying job she moved to that place of opportunity and got a car. The voucher was tied to a job and money management program at her church and the department of housing. Now Mary and her children are in a better neighborhood with a better education and she is a beacon of hope for her entire family.