



Catholic Charities

SOCIAL CONCERNS • PARISH SOCIAL MINISTRY

Legislative Education Group (L.E.G.)

~ CELEBRATING 30 YEARS OF ADVOCACY ~

March 2008

PROTECT SENIORS: AGING HOMEOWNERS

Dear L.E.G. Member:

We write asking you to **support** legislation to help prevent elderly homeowners from inadvertently losing their homes for failing to pay property taxes. The proposal is HB 722 (Property) – Tax Sale, Notification.

Background:

- An 84 year old Maryland woman lost her home because she failed to pay property taxes. She suffered from dementia and was unable to handle her financial affairs independently. Because she lived alone, no one knew of her need for assistance.
- Local area agencies on aging (AAAs) can work with local social service agencies, legal aid attorneys, family members, and other community partners to assist seniors when crises like this arise.
- Seniors generally prefer to remain in their homes and can do so successfully with appropriate supports.

HB 722 Would:

- Require local tax collection agents to notify local area agencies on aging of any homeowner subject to a tax sale who has owned their home for 25 years or longer.
- The notification requirement would enable the local agency to contact the homeowner to determine whether he or she is in need of assistance.
- The local agency would have the opportunity to offer necessary interventions and help avert the crisis of losing a home.

Why Support HB 722?

- It will provide a safety net for older Marylanders who fail to pay their property taxes because they suffer from Alzheimer's disease, dementia, or other health conditions that impair their ability to manage their personal affairs.

What YOU can do to HELP...

No later than this Friday, email a brief note to the member of the House Ways and Means Committee from your jurisdiction (see list at end of alert). If your delegate is not on the Ways and Means Committee, email the Chairwoman Sheila Hixson. To find out whom your legislators are go to <http://mdelect.net/>

A "Sample Alert Letter" is enclosed on the following page.

This is a timely issue that offers you the opportunity to help prevent Maryland seniors from losing their homes because of their inability to manage their personal affairs. Your action is valuable to vulnerable seniors who suffer from dementia or other health impairments which affect their cognitive abilities.

We are grateful for your willingness to add your voice in support of the Property Tax Sale Notification requirement.

Sincerely,



Allison Stone
L.E.G. Coordinator
Parish Social Ministry

The human person is the clearest reflection of God's presence in the world; all of the Church's work in pursuit of both justice and peace is designed to protect and promote the dignity of every person. For each person not only reflects God, but is the expression of God's creative work and the meaning of Christ's redemptive ministry.

-The Challenge of Peace, #15

S A M P L E " A L E R T " L E T T E R

Name
Address
Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: Support of HB 722 (Property) – Tax Sale, Notification to protect aging Marylanders from losing their homes.

Dear Chairwoman or Delegate _____:

As a Maryland resident who cares about the well-being of Maryland seniors, I support **HB 722**.

No older person living in our State should lose their home because they failed to pay their property taxes as a result of dementia or another health condition that impaired their ability to manage their personal affairs. I believe it is important to create a safety net to assist seniors who have the financial means but fail to pay their taxes. These aging Marylanders may need assistance and the local agencies can intervene and work with family members and other local resources to help avert a crisis. We must treat our seniors, the State's fastest growing population, with dignity and provide the necessary support when they are at risk of losing their homes because of age-related health conditions.

[or insert reason to ask support based on your own experiences and/or volunteer activities].

I urge you to support HB 722.

Thank you for considering my views.

Sincerely,

Your Name
Your Address

S A M P L E " A L E R T " L E T T E R

The House Ways and Means Committee

Chair: The Honorable Sheila E. Hixson

Sheila.Hixson@house.state.md.us

Vice Chair: Ann Marie Doory

AnnMarie.Doory@house.state.md.us

Joseph Bartlett

Joseph.Bartlett@house.state.md.us

Kumar Barve

Kumar.Barve@house.state.md.us

Jon Cardin

Jon.Cardin@house.state.md.us

D. Page Elmore

Page.Elmore@house.state.md.us

C. William Frick

William.Frick@house.state.md.us

Ron George

Ron.George@house.state.md.us

James Gilchrist

James.Gilchrist@house.state.md.us

Carolyn J.B. Howard

Carolyn.Howard@house.state.md.us

Jolene Ivey

Jolene.Ivey@house.state.md.us

J.B. Jennings

JB.Jennings@house.state.md.us

Anne Kaiser

Anne.Kaiser@house.state.md.us

Susan Krebs

Susan.Krebs@house.state.md.us

Robert McKee

Robert.Mckee@house.state.md.us

Peter Murphy

Peter.Murphy@house.state.md.us

John Olszewski

John.Olszewski@house.state.md.us

Craig Rice

Craig.Rice@house.state.md.us

Justin Ross

Justin.Ross@house.state.md.us

Melvin Stukes

Melvin.Stukes@house.state.md.us

Frank Turner

Frank.Turner@house.state.md.us

Jay Walker

Jay.Walker@house.state.md.us