



ANNE ARUNDEL
CONNECTING TOGETHER



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March 9, 2021

**WE WANT TO LIVE IN OUR OWN HOMES
SUPPORT HB933/SB566**

ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY – TRANSFER TAX – HOUSING TRUST SPECIAL REVENUE FUND

“I bought my first home with the help of a housing trust fund in Annapolis. I worked hard to save the money, but needed help with the closing costs. I know so many others in my church who would benefit from this in the county.”

–Grandmother and church leader, 2021

Dear Members of the Environment and Transportation Committee:

We ask for your favorable support on HB 933/SB 566. Over the past three years, ACT, a strictly non-partisan citizen’s organization representing 27 congregations, non-profits, and small businesses across our county, has been *listening to our community*. Housing affordability is at the top of families’ lists of concerns. Many of the thousands of people we have talked with have told us, over and over again, that they try to save, they work multiple jobs, but they cannot get over the hump of housing affordability as housing prices rise and rise in our county, outstripping the pace of wage increases. We asked for a Housing Trust Fund in the county as part of a package of solutions that give hardworking people a chance at housing security and affordability. **This bill helps make their dream a reality.**

Working moms and dads are being left behind. Over four years, housing prices have surged over 10% across the county while wages have not kept up. Rents have increased accordingly. People are saving, but the realities of closing costs and other fees become too far a stretch to get on a housing ladder with a bottom rung that is ever being driven out of reach. Included in this group are our teachers, law enforcement professionals, first responders, medical and dental technicians, and other middle class families who not only make our community whole, but have been essential to our community negotiating a pandemic. **We want them living in Anne Arundel County, but so many have told us they live farther away because it’s too expensive to live here. Let’s fix that.**

This bill is a benefit to our county’s middle class. The transfer tax will not be imposed upon properties that sell for under \$1 million in a county where the median housing price ranges between \$300,000-\$400,000. As an example, **only three of 81 properties – fewer than 4% –** transferred in Anne Arundel County in August 2020 would have been subject to this tax. Further, it will be set and held accountable by the County Council, the most direct elected representatives of county citizens. **Working class people getting on the housing ladder and storing up equity will increase the tax base of our county for the mutual benefit of all citizens.**

This bill helps provide a lifeline that maintains the integrity of our communities for the mutual benefit of everyone. **We urge you to vote for a favorable recommendation for HB 933/SB 566.**

ACT MEMBER INSTITUTIONS

Annapolis Friends Meeting
Asbury UMC, Annapolis
Broadneck Baptist Church
First Presbyterian Church of Annapolis
Fresh Start Church, Glen Burnie
Joy Reigns Lutheran Church
New Life Fellowship, Hanover

St. Margaret’s Episcopal Church, Annapolis
The United Church of Christ of Annapolis

A.A. Co. Muslim Council
Ark and Dove Presbyterian Church
Asbury Broadneck UMC
First Christian Community Church

Gloria Dei! Lutheran Church, Arnold
Kingdom Celebration Center, Odenton
St. Andrew By the Bay Roman Catholic Church
St. Philip’s Episcopal Church, Annapolis

Woods Memorial Presbyterian Church, Severna Park

NAACP A.A. Co. Branch
Bread and Butter Kitchen
Christ Our Anchor Presbyterian Church
New Creations Deliverance Ministries

Islamic Society of Annapolis
Light House, Annapolis
St. Anne’s Episcopal Church, Annapolis

Unitarian Universalist Church of Annapolis

an affiliate of the Industrial Areas Foundation