

# ODETTE RAMOS

Councilwoman District 14



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100 N. Holliday Street, Room 506, Baltimore MD 21202

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**Testimony**  
**21-0099 – Study and Report – Tax Sale Accounting**  
**Position: Favorable**

Chair Costello and Members of the Ways and Means Committee:

I am writing to urge your support of 21-0099 - Study and Report – Tax Sale Accounting. This legislation comes from the extensive work of my colleagues and I this past spring to help families avoid tax sale, prior to the Mayor's announcement that he would remove homeowners who entered tax sale for the first time, or the first time in 4 years. This also comes from the experience that organizations who help residents avoid tax sale have had with the tax sale system for many years.

21-0099 simply asks the Department of Finance to outline in a report their plans for improving the system whereby people pay their taxes. We found multiple errors such as:

- Payments not being accounted for properly, resulting in a homeowner ending up in tax sale.
- Homeowner's Property Tax Credit not being applied properly, resulting in tax sale.
- Questions about the exact amount that a person owes.
- Misclassification of occupied and non-occupied properties.
- Tangled titles resulting in misclassification of properties.

There are multiple examples of residents suffering from these errors in our accounting system. One of my constituents paid their taxes, and ended up going through tax sale. It has taken a toll on his health and finances, as a mistake by the City resulted in payment of more than double the lien owed.

In preparation for this hearing, we have had multiple conversations with the Department of Finance and the City Administrator's Office who has acknowledged the challenges and will work to rectify the situation. The report resulting from this legislation will outline their plan and timeline for these changes.

Such changes will make the system of paying property taxes in Baltimore City easier, more credible, and less stressful for residents. It will cut down on the problems residents have with accounting, and will lower the incidence of tax sale due to accounting errors. I am humbly requesting your support of this legislation and I look forward to the subsequent report.

Respectfully Submitted:

Odette Ramos  
Baltimore City Councilwoman, District 14