



THE COORDINATING CENTER R
INSPIRED SOLUTIONS

Support
HB 231 – Housing Opportunities Made Equal Act
House Environment and Transportation Committee
February 4, 2020

The Coordinating Center (The Center) supports *House Bill 231 – Housing Opportunities Made Equal Act*. This bill prohibits a person from refusing to sell or rent a dwelling because of source of income.

The Center is an independent, care coordination organization with over 35 years of experience, coordinating services for more than 10,000 people with disabilities and complex medical needs across the state. While much of the work conducted by The Center is funded through public and private partnerships with State agencies, hospital systems, and other health care entities, securing affordable housing options for individuals with disabilities and complex medical needs continues to be one of The Center's greatest challenges. This is due to shortages in housing subsidies and a lack of affordable housing options, particularly housing options that are fully accessible to individuals with disabilities.

In addition, while most of Maryland Medicaid's home and community-based waivers and programs have a primary goal of assisting individuals with disabilities and complex medical needs remain in their communities and out of more expensive institutional settings, housing is a critical component that is not covered by Medicaid but necessary to reach that goal.

For many individuals with significant disabilities and complex medical needs, housing assistance available through subsidies and vouchers are oftentimes the only means by which an individual may remain independent in their community. In most cases, there are multi-year waiting lists for housing assistance. Unfortunately, many individuals find that once they have the ability to cover the costs of rent, they still do not have access due to restrictions landlords place on sources of income. Without this legislation, individuals with disabilities and complex medical needs will continue to face significant challenges in securing affordable and accessible housing when attempting to live in the community.

Thank you for your consideration of our testimony. If you need any additional information, please contact Rachael Faulkner at (410) 693-4000 or rfaulkner@policypartners.net.

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