

HB 231: The HOME Act – SUPPORT

Testimony of Bruce E. Kahn, US Navy Captain (Retired)

kahnb7@gmail.com

Jewish War Veterans of the United States

Maryland Department of the Jewish War Veterans

House Environment and Transportation Committee

February 4, 2020

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee,

I am Rabbi Bruce E. Kahn, a retired Captain, Chaplain Corps, United States Navy.

Thank you for examining my testimony on HB 231. I address you on behalf of the Jewish War Veterans of the United States of America and the Maryland Department of the Jewish War Veterans.

In an ancient rabbinic text this teaching appears: “The world is sustained by three things: truth, justice, and peace.” (Mishnah Avot 1:18). It is based on the quote from the Biblical book of Zechariah, which in 8:16 states: “Execute the judgment of truth and peace in your gates.” I have always understood this to mean that when we ascertain and apply the truth we have a better chance of achieving justice, and through clear and transparent justice we have a better chance of achieving peace and well-being. In my belief system this has much to do with what God expects of us and has commissioned each of us to pursue.

My plea to each of you is simply stated. Let the truth about Source of Income Protection lead you to a just decision about this bill such that a greater measure of peace and well being shall bless our State of Maryland.

We speak often and passionately about the need to do the right thing by our veterans who have given so much to so many who themselves may not have chosen to put on the uniform. Yet today, if a veteran receives a VASH

voucher it is legal in most of the State of Maryland for any landlord to refuse that veteran and his or her family a decent place to live because the veteran receives assistance to pay the rent. It is a matter of 'thank you for your service and sacrifice, but no, you may not live here!'

It is time to do the right thing and to stop the housing discrimination against veterans, the elderly of limited means, people with disabilities, single moms and others all based on a blanket refusal to accept vouchers. If the prospective tenant can cover the rent, with or without assistance, and is a fine human being and in every respect meets landlord standards for tenants, it is dehumanizing to refuse that individual a decent home.

In Montgomery County protection from source of income discrimination has worked well for thirty years. Protection from source of income discrimination is not driving landlords out of business in Montgomery, Howard, Frederick or in the eleven states and numerous municipalities where such a law exists. It is time to make the Free State free of source of income discrimination.

Let the truth about Source of Income Protection lead you to a just decision about this bill such that a greater measure of peace and well being shall bless our State of Maryland. Give a favorable report to HB 231.

Very respectfully,
Rabbi Bruce E. Kahn
CAPT, CHC, USN (Ret)
4450 S. Park Avenue
Apt. 1801
Chevy Chase, MD 20815