

HB 231: The HOME Act– SUPPORT

Testimony of Mary Bradford, Program Manager on behalf of Beyond the Boundaries
House Environment and Transportation Committee, February 4, 2020

Beyond the Boundaries urges our Maryland State Delegates to pass HB 231: Housing Opportunities Made Equal (HOME) Act.

Beyond the Boundaries is an Archdiocese of Baltimore program with members from churches throughout Maryland. We recognize the need for Catholic organizations to advocate for social justice, especially to address the lack of affordable housing in neighborhoods of choice. We believe it's our moral obligation to remove the impediments to fair housing for our most vulnerable citizens – the elderly, disabled, veterans and children. Denying individuals housing opportunities when they have a legal and sufficient source of income is discriminatory. Beyond the Boundaries believes that supporting the HB 231: The HOME Act is living out the moral call to love our neighbor.

Therefore, we call on our Maryland Delegates to follow us in loving our neighbor and urge you to pass HB 231: The HOME Act, without amendments.

To love our neighbor is to care about the conditions in which they live. Providing vulnerable individuals with access to housing of choice – such that they can choose their physical and social environment - allows them to improve life outcomes. Individuals will be able to live closer to jobs, send their children to better schools, and have access to community resources that improve overall quality of life. This legislation will help create more mixed income communities and deconcentrate poverty by opening housing opportunities in other neighborhoods. Veterans, people who are disabled, elderly and low income families will have better housing opportunities. When we improve outcomes for our neighbors, we improve our own communities. The HB 231: The HOME Act supports a brighter future for all people of Maryland.

To love our neighbor also means we care about the outcome for our neighbor's children. When families of young children have the opportunity to live in low poverty neighborhoods, research shows children fare better. They are more academically successful, and are more likely to finish high school and attend college. When young children move to neighborhoods of opportunity, they are less likely to be single parents as adults, have higher marriage rates, and have greater future earnings. The HOME Act lays the foundation to reduce pockets of poverty throughout Maryland, and ultimately break the cycle of poverty for the most vulnerable of our neighbors.

It is time for Maryland to answer a moral call to action. It's time we open up housing and job opportunities for tens of thousands of Marylanders. It's time to pass the HB 231: The HOME Act.

Sources:

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