

SHANEKA HENSON  
Legislative District 30A  
Anne Arundel County

Appropriations Committee



The Maryland House of Delegates  
6 Bladen Street, Room 152  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401  
410-841-3045 · 301-858-3045  
800-492-7122 Ext. 3045  
Shaneka.Henson@house.state.md.us

THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

House Bill 544 – City of Annapolis – Housing Authority – Prohibitions Against  
Exceptions to Local Laws

Testimony of Delegate Shaneka Henson

March 10, 2020

Chairman Kumar Barve  
Environment & Transportation Committee  
Room 251  
House Office Building  
6 Bladen Street  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Members of the Environment & Transportation Committee:

Thank you Chairman Barve, Vice Chairman Stein, and members of the Environment & Transportation Committee for hearing HB 544. HB 544 closes a perceived loophole in the State Code that has been used as a basis for the City of Annapolis and the Housing Authority of the City of Annapolis to agree to make an unconditional exception to the City's rental property licensing and inspection requirements for the Housing Authority's properties.

The Housing Authority's unlicensed status became ripe for legislative action during a series of failure to pay rent cases, culminating in *Housing Authority of the City of Annapolis v. LaDawn Camp*, D071-LT-19-001816 (2019), where Anne Arundel County District Court Judge, Hon. John P. McKenna, stated in his ruling -- "The Court does not find -- first of all, I find that the issue of deciding whether or not HACA should be exempted from the licensing requirements of the City laws is a legislative act. A legislative decision." The District Court of Anne Arundel County's ruling has asked this body to clarify the State Code and HB 544 makes the necessary clarification.

HB 544 makes it clear that the City of Annapolis may not make exception for Housing Authority properties to the licensing and inspection requirements that are applied to every rental property in the City of Annapolis. The bill allows the City to amend the time allotted for re-inspection of units that failed an initial inspection to better comport with the Authority's procurement

procedure & public body structure, allows the City to waive any fees or fines associated with licensing and inspections, and applies HB 544 prospectively only.

The bill satisfies the Court's urging that the legislature determine the City's ability to exempt the Housing Authority regarding licensure and inspection, the bill is narrowly tailored to accomplish that goal, all the while, providing the flexibility needed for the Housing Authority to continue to comply with the City's licensing and inspection requirements. Most importantly, HB 544 provides the families residing in properties owned and maintained by the Housing Authority with the same protection under the law from their local government as is provided to every other family residing in rental housing in the City of Annapolis.

For the foregoing reasons, I respectfully ask that the Environment & Transportation Committee recommend favorably House Bill 544.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Shaneka Henson  
Delegate, Legislative District 30A

NED CAREY  
CHAIR

MARK CHANG  
VICE CHAIR



THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401  
ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY HOUSE DELEGATION

February 19, 2020

Chairman Kumar Barve  
Environment and Transportation Committee  
Room 251  
6 Bladen St.  
Annapolis, MD 21401

**RE: HB 544-City of Annapolis-Housing Authority- Prohibitions Against Exceptions of Local Laws**

Dear Chairman Barve and Environment and Transportation Committee Members

The Anne Arundel County House Delegation voted on the above bill on Friday February 7, 2020. The Delegation voted in FAVOR of the bill with the attached amendment making the bill a Delegation bill. The vote tally was 12-0. A copy of the vote tally is attached. We respectfully request that the committee grant a favorable report on this bill.

Thank you for consideration of this bill.

Sincerely,

Ned Carey  
Chairman  
Anne Arundel County House Delegation