



**Senate Bill 848** – Statewide Rental Assistance Voucher Program -- Establishment

**Position: Favorable**

Maryland REALTORS® support SB 848 which would establish a rental assistance program for low-income families who qualify for the federal housing choice voucher program but are put on a waiting list.

The Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development published a housing needs assessment in 2020 which concluded that Maryland has a deficit of 85,000 rental units for its lowest income citizens. The Maryland REALTORS® estimated that a general housing shortage of 120,000 for all families in the state. This chronic undersupply makes housing more expensive.

One of the federal programs which helps poorer families deal with housing costs is the federal housing choice voucher program. Eligible families receive payments to help with their rent costs and those payments often mean the difference between housing or homelessness. While the housing voucher program is well established and has had success, thousands of Maryland families qualify for the program but end up on waiting lists that can be years long.

SB 848 helps address the waiting list problem by creating a state program that will provide voucher assistance to families on the housing choice voucher waiting lists. The assistance is provided for up to 5 years or until the family starts receiving federal assistance.

The Maryland REALTORS® believes SB 848 helps both tenants and landlords and recommends a favorable report.

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