



State of Maryland Commission on Civil Rights

Respect...Integrity...Effective Communication

February 21, 2023

HB 460 Department of Housing and Community Development- Racial Equity Impact Assessment

POSITION: Support

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Dear Chairperson Barve, Vice Chairperson Stein, and Members of the Environment and Transportation Committee

The Maryland Commission on Civil Rights (“MCCR”; “The Commission”) is the State agency responsible for the enforcement of laws prohibiting discrimination in employment, housing, public accommodations, health services, and state contracts based on race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, marital status, familial status, sexual orientation, gender identity, genetic information, physical and mental disability, and source of income.

HB 460 requires the Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD), by December 31, 2024 and each year thereafter, to complete a racial equity impact assessment evaluating the impact of financial assistance administered by the Department. The assessment should determine whether the assistance is equitably invested in the communities with the greatest need and those with the largest populations of economically marginalized peoples. HB 460 also requires the Department to work with independent experts on the assessment and to make the assessment available to the public.

The Commission supports HB 460 as it will directly create a structural framework that will ensure that marginalized communities are receiving the appropriate allocation of financial assistance in an equitable and unbiased manner. Historically, many times funds earmarked for marginalized communities are shifted to other “priority” areas without any level of transparency’ accountability or supporting rationale. HB 460 will ensure that allocation decisions will be made through an equity lens.

The data from “Housing Matters-*An Urban Institute Initiative*” suggest that by having an assessment that focuses on racial equity impact, marginalized communities will be able to increase resources in the areas of housing assistance, health, socioeconomic mobility, and education to name a few.

“Our vision is to have a State that is free from any trace of unlawful discrimination.”

For these reasons, the Maryland Commission on Civil Rights urges a favorable vote on HB 49. Thank you for your time and consideration of the information contained in this letter. The Maryland Commission on Civil Rights looks forward to the continued opportunity to work with you to improve and promote civil rights in Maryland.