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**HB460 - Department of Housing and Community Development - Racial Equity Impact Assessment  
Hearing before the House Environment and Transportation Committee,**

**February 21, 2023**

**Position: FAVORABLE**

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The Public Justice Center (PJC) is a nonprofit public interest law firm that stands with tenants to protect and expand their rights to safe, habitable, affordable, and non-discriminatory housing and their rights to fair and equal treatment by Maryland's landlord-tenant laws, courts, and agencies. We advocate to change laws regarding evictions and to demand the development of equitable and sustainable affordable housing. PJC believes House Bill 460 is a critical measure to address the racial disparity in access to safe and stable housing and promoting racial justice. We believe requiring an annual racial equity impact assessment is the first step to achieving these goals.

Racial equity in how housing services are administered is an important step in addressing the racist history of the state of Maryland and the United States when it comes to housing. Racist zoning, development planning, as well as exclusionary private covenants have led to the disenfranchisement of thousands of black people, poor people, disabled people, and other racial, ethnic, and religious minorities. We cannot know how to fix these deeply entrenched issues without the necessary data to know where the issues specifically lie.

HB460 provides the state the necessary tools to know whether the agency's spending has been equitable and has affirmatively furthered fair housing and race equity in the state. A report commissioned by the state showed that the state has an affordability gap in providing affordable rental housing.<sup>1</sup> This gap mainly affects minorities, families, and the disabled. The tool mandated by this bill will guide the Department on how to begin fixing these rampant issues and also provide transparency for the public.

Public Justice Center is a member of the Renters United Maryland coalition and asks that the Committee **issue a FAVORABLE report on HB460**. If you have any questions, please contact Albert Turner, Esq., turnera@publicjustice.org (410) 625-9409 Ext. 250.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://dhcd.maryland.gov/Documents/Other%20Publications/Report.pdf> pg. 23