



## House Bill 69

*Community Development Administration -  
Live Near Where You Teach Program - Establishment*

MACo Position: **SUPPORT**

To: Environment & Transportation Committee

Date: January 30, 2024

From: Dominic J. Butchko

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS** HB 69. This bill establishes the Live Near Where You Teach Program, which offers rental and homebuyer assistance for school staff.

For the 2024 Maryland General Assembly Session, MACo has made it a priority – one of the Association’s four legislative initiatives – to *Advance Comprehensive Housing Solutions*. Much like climate change and sea level rise, the challenges surrounding affordable housing are vast and call for a large, multipronged effort. While in other policy areas, it may be easy to deduce a simple cause-and-effect relationship, housing is a complex web of multifaceted factors. Addressing challenges like workforce, financing, interest rates, broad economic trends, supply chain, and large out-of-state corporate interests – among many other obstacles – requires an all-hands-on-deck effort from policy makers at all levels.

MACo is working with sponsors to cross-file legislation to target several components of this crisis: abandonment/blight disincentives, corporate owner transparency, and short-term rental oversight. Additionally, under this initiative, counties will be supporting other pro-housing legislation which helps to advance the conversation, balances local flexibility, and ensures more Marylanders can afford a place to call home.

Counties support HB 69 as it both provides an additional tool in the toolbox in addressing affordable housing and supports critical elements of the education workforce. This legislation also makes smart use of local programs as force multipliers that can be used in conjunction with this new state benefit. While school staff are not the only government workforce in need of additional support, the Live Near Where You Teach Program offers a step in the right direction, with financing tools to help combat today’s difficult financial marketplace for new homebuyers.

To meet the state and local obligations under the Blueprint, it is important to ensure that not only educators, but all school staff have somewhere affordable to call home. For this reason, MACo urges the committee to give HB 69 a **FAVORABLE** report.