



One Park Place | Suite 475 | Annapolis, MD 21401-3475
1-866-542-8163 | Fax: 410-837-0269
aarp.org/md | md@aarp.org | twitter: @aarpm
facebook.com/aarpm

HB 139 Landlord and Tenant - Office of Home Energy Programs - Financial Assistance
House Environment and Transportation Committee
Favorable
January 30, 2024

Good afternoon, Chair Korman and members of the House Environment and Transportation Committee. I am Tammy Bresnahan Senior Director of Advocacy for AARP Maryland. We thank Delegate Charkoudian for sponsoring this important bill. AARP Maryland is an organization representing the interests of Marylanders age 50 and older and their families. Key priorities of our organization include helping all Marylanders achieve financial and health security. AARP MD supports HB 139 Landlord and Tenant –Office of Home Energy Programs—Financial Assistance.

AARP is working hard to strengthen retirement security for all Americans by ensuring that workers and retirees have access to their hard earned and hard saved dollars. The rising cost of essential necessities, including groceries, utilities, and prescription drugs, is of significant concern for millions of Marylanders, especially for older and retired Marylanders living on fixed incomes. In fact, according to an AARP study, in 2017, 22% of Maryland residents stopped taking medication as prescribed due to rising costs.

Older Marylanders on fixed incomes clearly feel the effects of inflation more than the rest of us. These retirees bear a disproportionate brunt of drug and medical inflation, which is significantly higher than overall inflation. And when they can't pay their gas and electric, life becomes even more problematic.

HB 139 allows renters whose utility bill is included in their rent to access energy assistance.

AARP believes energy efficiency programs should specifically target customers who have low incomes, renters, and other hard-to-reach customers. States should consider assigning the responsibility of administering ratepayer-funded energy efficiency programs to an independent entity like the Office of Home Energy Programs (OHEP) to make sure renters get the energy assistance they need.

For these reasons, we ask for a favorable report on HB139. If you have questions, please contact me tbresnahan@aarp.org or by calling 410-302-8451.



