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February 19, 2024

Senator William C. Smith, Jr., Chair  
Senator Jeff Waldstreicher, Vice Chair  
2 East  
Miller Senate Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: Support for Senate Bill 773 – Homeowners Associations – Restriction on Long-Term Rentals – Prohibition

Hearing before the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee on February 20, 2024

Position: Support (FAV)

Dear Honorable Members of the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on behalf of the Baltimore Regional Housing Partnership (BRHP). I am writing to express our support for Senate Bill 773. BRHP is a non-profit organization that expands housing choices for families with low incomes who have historically been excluded from housing in well-resourced neighborhoods, helping them to access and transition successfully to safe, healthy, and economically vibrant communities.

As the Regional Administrator for the Baltimore Housing Mobility Program, BRHP has opened pathways to a better future for low-income families for over 10 years. BRHP currently provides over 4,300 low-income families with over \$80 million in rental assistance annually in the form of the Housing Choice Voucher and couples that with counseling supports for families as they move from areas of concentrated poverty to areas of opportunity in Baltimore City and the five surrounding counties. BRHP is dedicated to helping achieve racially and socially equitable public policy that ensures low-income families have access to quality and affordable homes in communities of their choice.

The proposed legislation, which seeks to amend Section 11B-111.11 (Article—Real Property) of the Annotated Code of Maryland, is a step in the right direction to protecting the rights of Maryland renters, ensuring that homeowners who wish to rent out their properties for economic gain have the choice, and that homeowners who may have biases against renters are not skirting the intentions of the HOME Act, which was enacted in 2020 to help expand housing choice for all.





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### Housing Availability

The restriction of long-term rentals by homeowners' associations (HOAs) may significantly reduce the number of available, affordable rental properties within a community. Not only does it restrict a much-needed housing supply, but it also hoards opportunities in terms of access to good schools, higher-paying jobs, and community amenities.

This limitation can exacerbate housing shortages, particularly in areas where demand for rental properties is high. By prohibiting HOAs from imposing such restrictions, this bill will enable more homeowners across Maryland to offer their properties for rent, thereby adding to the available and affordable housing stock. It is a critical measure for ensuring that our communities can grow and thrive with a diverse range of housing options.

### Family Stability

This increase in available long-term rental properties has several benefits. Specifically, long-term rentals offer greater stability for tenants compared to short-term rentals, especially for tenants with children. Families with school-aged children benefit greatly from long-term tenancies as they help ensure children can remain in the same school for an extended period. This continuity is important for academic performance and social development, as frequent moves can disrupt a child's education and development. Further, long-term residency in one area allows families to establish relationships with local service providers, such as healthcare professionals, which is critical to managing health and accessing care. Additionally, as we have seen in our program, tenants who reside in a community for longer periods are more likely to invest in their neighborhoods, contributing to local economies and fostering community ties leading to stronger, more resilient neighborhoods.

### Flexibility for Homeowners

Moreover, this bill will benefit property owners by allowing for greater flexibility regarding owner-inhabited housing. Long-term rentals can provide a stable source of income for homeowners, especially in times of economic uncertainty. This bill supports the economic well-being of Maryland residents who choose to rent out their homes, enhancing the quality of life for themselves and for residents seeking stable, affordable housing solutions.

### Fair Housing and Housing Opportunities

SB 773 takes an important step toward fostering community diversity and addressing the lingering effects of historic housing discrimination practices, including redlining. Historically, neighborhoods with access to educational and economic opportunities, low poverty rates, and greater public safety have been less accessible to communities of color and communities with lower incomes due to exclusionary, discriminatory practices. Protecting the





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availability of long-term rentals ensures that more individuals and families continue to have the opportunity to live in neighborhoods from which they have previously been excluded, promoting increased opportunities for Maryland renters.

Additionally, restricting and limiting long-term rentals undermines source of income protection laws, which are guaranteed in Maryland; imposing restrictions on long-term rentals can limit the availability of rental properties for voucher holders and others who rely on alternative sources of income, effectively excluding them from certain communities and perpetuating economic segregation. By prohibiting homeowners' associations from restricting long-term rentals, this bill ensures that all property owners can rent to individuals regardless of their income source. This is a significant step towards fair housing practices and ensures that individuals and families who utilize housing assistance programs are not unfairly barred from living in communities of their choosing.

By supporting this bill, BRHP is continuing our commitment to the creation of more inclusive communities that reflect the diversity of our state. SB 773 has the potential to help preserve stability for Maryland renters, while also helping to dismantle the legacy of redlining and other forms of housing discrimination by promoting equal access to housing opportunities for all Maryland residents. We appreciate your consideration and urge the Committee to issue a favorable report for SB 773.

Sincerely,

Adria Crutchfield

Executive Director

