



CITY TAKOMA OF PARK MARYLAND

Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

February 6, 2025

SB 513: Real Property - Unlawfully Restrictive Covenant - Modification by Municipalities Support

The City of Takoma Park supports Senate Bill SB 513.

It is unlawful to refuse to sell or lease real property to a person because of race, color, religion, gender, national origin, age, familial status, or disability or to include in any instrument a restrictive covenant based on such characteristics. Many deeds continue to contain unlawful restrictive language, despite it being unenforceable. Over 1200 properties within the City of Takoma Park have unlawful restrictive language in their deed.

The City supported changes in 2023 to § 3-112 of the Real Property Article which provided local governments with the ability to review deeds on file, and with the required notice, modify deeds to remove restrictive covenants. However, the City has found practical challenges in meeting the state's notification requirements to effectively remove these covenants. For example, how should the City define and identify persons with an ownership interest in a property?

The City appreciates the sponsors of this bill as it includes additional notification methods, like newspaper and website postings, which will make implementation easier.

The City of Takoma Park wishes to expedite the removal of covenants from all deeds within the city. We aim to correct historical injustices and affirm our stance against racism. But we need SB 513 to make this effort easier for our community and other municipalities wishing to follow our example.

We urge a favorable report on Senate Bill 513.