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BILL NO.: **HB 231**

TITLE: Housing Opportunities Made Equal Act

SPONSOR: Delegate Lierman

COMMITTEE: Environment and Transportation

POSITION: **SUPPORT**

DATE: February 4, 2020

Baltimore County **SUPPORTS** House Bill 231 – Housing Opportunities Made Equal Act. This bill prohibits discriminatory practices in residential real estate transactions and the sale or rental of a dwelling because of a person’s source of income.

Every person deserves the chance to provide their families with a safe, affordable place to call home. County Executive Olszewski has long stated that we have moral obligation to expand access to affordable housing in Baltimore County and across the State of Maryland.

For decades, efforts to expand this access have been severely impeded by the ability of landlords to discriminate against a potential tenant based on that individual’s source of income. It has helped contribute to the concentrated pockets of poverty that are all too prevalent in our State. Discrimination in any form is wrong. Just as renters cannot be discriminated against based on their race, sex, or religion, it is time for the Maryland to end discrimination based on their source of income.

In 2019, source of income discrimination was made illegal in Baltimore County, Anne Arundel County and Baltimore City. These jurisdictions joined Montgomery, Frederick and Howard Counties, where the practice was already illegal. More than half of Marylanders now live in a jurisdiction that prohibit source of income discrimination. It is time for General Assembly to take the final step and ban it statewide.

Accordingly, Baltimore County requests a **FAVORABLE** report on HB 231. For more information, please contact Chuck Conner, Chief Legislative Officer, at 443-900-6582.