

HB 231: The HOME Act – SUPPORT

Testimony of Henry Bogdan, Policy Director, hbogdan@mdnonprofit.org
Maryland Nonprofits
House Environment and Transportation Committee, February 4, 2020

Maryland Nonprofits strongly supports House Bill 231 prohibiting discrimination in housing opportunities against individuals or families based on their source of lawful income or support.

House Bill 231 **does not** prohibit a landlord from determining the ability of the tenant to comply with lease terms, pay the rental price, or from evaluating the renter's suitability as a tenant.

A great number of our member organizations across the state are advocates for, or provide direct or indirect services to, disadvantaged persons receiving either public or private financial assistance from a myriad of sources. Access to adequate and safe housing is always a vital concern, and for disadvantaged families in Maryland, where housing costs are among the highest in the nation, this is a critical problem.

Difficulties in obtaining stable housing arrangements can seriously jeopardize the future of these families in many ways, including access to employment or educational opportunities, stable school placements for children, and access to health care providers. Further, these practices have a disproportionately strong discriminatory impact on people and families of color – contributing to the racial inequities in our state.

State and federal programs try, with ever more limited resources, to assure adequate, safe and affordable housing for all people regardless of income. Discrimination against tenants using government vouchers or supports is a factor that works against these efforts being effective, particularly for the most vulnerable families.

We urge you to give House Bill 231 a **favorable report**.