



# Housing Initiative Partnership, Inc.

30 YEARS of Housing Security | Financial Stability | Community Success

## **HB 231: The HOME Act – SUPPORT**

Testimony of Stephanie Prange Proestel, Deputy Director, Housing Initiative Partnership, Inc.  
sproestel@hiphomes.org  
House Environment and Transportation Committee, February 4, 2020

### **About HIP**

HIP is an innovative, green nonprofit housing developer and HUD-certified housing counseling agency based in Prince George's County, Maryland dedicated to revitalizing neighborhoods and removing blight. With 30 years' experience, HIP creates housing and economic security for persons of low- and moderate-income and provides services that improve the quality of life in the communities we serve.

### **The HOME Act**

HB 231 simply prohibits landlords and other property owners from discriminating against a person seeking housing based on their type of income. This legislation will deconcentrate poverty; ensure fairness for our most vulnerable populations in seeking housing; create more mixed-income communities, and ensure better housing and economic opportunity for thousands of Marylanders.

**Under HB 530, applicant screening is allowed.** Landlords may still determine the renter's ability to comply with all lease terms, verify source and amount of income, evaluate stability and security of the renter's income, and evaluate the applicants tenant history and suitability. No landlord will be required to take an applicant that does not meet their established criteria.

The bill **DOES NOT** prevent a landlord from refusing income derived from criminal activity.

The bill **DOES NOT** slow down or prevent housing and economic development, as evidenced by other jurisdictions that have a long history of similar legislation in place.

The number of state and local legislatures that have enacted prohibitions against source of income discrimination has increased significantly. Today, similar legislation is in place in 16 states, 91 cities and counties, and many of our own Maryland jurisdictions—Howard, Montgomery, Frederick, Prince George's, Baltimore, Anne Arundel Counties and the cities of Baltimore Frederick and Annapolis. Many have had this legislation for over 20 years. In August 2017, the American Bar Association adopted a Resolution urging state and local governments to prohibit source of income discrimination.

We strongly encourage Maryland to eliminate housing discrimination and provide fair and equitable access to housing across the state by passing SB 530.

