



Empowerment. Integration. Equality.

1500 Union Ave., Suite 2000, Baltimore, MD 21211

Phone: 410-727-6352 | Fax: 410-727-6389

www.DisabilityRightsMD.org

Disability Rights Maryland
House Environment and Transportation Committee
March 3, 2020
HB 1372
Position: Support

Disability Rights Maryland (DRM) is Maryland's Protection and Advocacy agency and is mandated by state and federal law to advocate for the rights of Marylanders with disabilities. DRM works to increase opportunities for individuals with disabilities to be part of their communities and live in safe, decent, affordable and accessible housing.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on HB 1347. We urge the Committee to issue a favorable report on HB 1347 because of the close connection between substandard housing and health disparities.

HB 1372 is a common-sense bill that expands access to justice for persons living in substandard housing by removing barriers that prevent people from asserting their legal rights to safe and decent housing. People with disabilities are 3 times as likely to live in poverty as their non-disabled peers.¹ This means that people with disabilities less likely to afford quality housing and more likely to reside in substandard housing. The conditions of substandard housing are a cause of additional health disparities in these families, many of whom already include people with disabilities.²

HB 1372 ensures mechanisms for tenants residing in these properties to cure conditions, such as exposure to high or low temperatures, pest infestation, water leaks, and poor air quality, that are demonstrably linked to long-term adverse health effects and exacerbating already existing impairments and disabilities.³

More safe, decent, affordable, and accessible housing for persons with disabilities must be created. However, families already residing in such substandard housing cannot wait for such relief and HB 1372 strengthens these families' right to live in safe and decent housing.

Please do not hesitate to contact me at the information below with any questions.

David A. Prater
Managing Attorney
Disability Rights Maryland
1500 Union Ave.

¹ PRICED OUT: THE HOUSING CRISIS FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES (2019), Technical Assistance Collaborative & Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities Housing Task Force, *available at* <http://www.tacinc.org/media/59493/priced-out-in-2016.pdf>

² "Housing and Health" *Issue Brief #7*, EXPLORING THE SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, *available at* <https://www.healthaffairs.org/doi/10.1377/hpb20180313.396577/full/>

³ *See Id.*



Suite 2000
Baltimore, MD 21211
443-692-2500
davidp@disabilityrightsmd.org

Empowerment. Integration. Equality.

1500 Union Ave., Suite 2000, Baltimore, MD 21211
Phone: 410-727-6352 | Fax: 410-727-6389
www.DisabilityRightsMD.org