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**HB 1406 - SUPPORT
MODEST HOME CHOICES ACT**

House Environment + Transportation Committee
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Dear Chair Barve and Members of the Environment + Transportation Committee:

My name is Dan Reed and I'm here to express my strong support for HB 1406, the Modest Home Choices Act. I wear a lot of hats: I'm an urban planner, I write about housing issues, and I have a Maryland real estate license.

I've also moved a lot: I'll be 32 next month, and in that time I've lived in 16 houses. To have a house is a choice: the choice to take a risk or settle down, to start a family or step out on your own, to try a new place or return to your home town.

In 1988, a garden apartment in Laurel gave my dad the choice to leave rural North Carolina for a better life here. In 1991, an apartment in Silver Spring gave my mom the choice to go back to college and raise me knowing that our family would be close by.

For many working people today, the choice of a modest home has become a luxury. Maryland is the 11th most expensive state to buy a home in, and we have the 3rd longest commutes in the nation. In the DC area alone, we'll need 374,000 new homes by 2030 to end our chronic housing shortage.

This bill could change that, by legalizing affordable homes in neighborhoods with the good jobs, schools, and transportation people need to climb the economic ladder - the same places that are basically off-limits to working people due to exclusionary zoning and neighbors who care more about their views than our future.

I would also recommend that we follow the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments recommendation to set state and local level housing targets to address housing production, accessibility, and affordability. This is something Oregon and California have both passed, and builds on the progress of Delegate Lierman's housing element bill, HB 1045, by adding quantifiable targets.

After years of moving around, my partner and I watched our friends and loved ones leave the state for cheaper housing and assumed we were next. Yet last fall we could afford a townhome in Silver Spring because it's a modest home, surrounded by modest homes that are illegal in most parts of Maryland: a townhome, on a block with cottages and four-unit apartment buildings and detached homes with accessory apartments.

I want more people to have the choice of staying here. That's why I urge you to support the Modest Home Choices Act.