

March 6, 2020

The Honorable Shane E. Pendergrass  
Chairman, Health & Government Operations Committee  
House Office Building, Room 241  
6 Bladen Street  
Annapolis, MD 21401

**RE: Opposition of House Bill 1561 (Discriminatory Housing Practices - Intent)**

Dear Chairman Pendergrass:

The Maryland Building Industry Association (MBIA), representing 100,000 employees of the building industry across the State of Maryland, opposes House Bill 1561 (Discriminatory Housing Practices - Intent).

This measure prohibits a landlord or property manager from behaving in a discriminatory manner towards tenants and potential tenants, regardless of the landlord's intent. While preventing, discouraging, and punishing discrimination in any form is important, this measure is too broad and unfairly encompasses too much. The actor's intent is important, and should be considered. It would be unfair to penalize a landlord whose actions could be misinterpreted as discriminatory, when there may be a legal and nondiscriminatory intent behind them. This law presumes intent and removes a landlord's chance to act as they see fit, and in a nondiscriminatory and legal way.

For these reasons, MBIA respectfully requests the Committee give this measure an unfavorable report. Thank you for your consideration.

For more information about this position, please contact Lori Graf at 410-800-7327 or [lgraf@marylandbuilders.org](mailto:lgraf@marylandbuilders.org).

cc: House Health & Government Operations Committee Members