

SB 530: HOME Act – SUPPORT

Testimony of Jill Williams, mommabear3422@gmail.com

Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee,

February 4, 2020

My name is Jill Williams. I am 61 years old and I served honorably in the U.S. Coast Guard from 1975 to 1981.

After my service, I married an honorably discharged veteran of the U.S. Army and we raised one child together. I worked as a commercial truck driver and cared for my family. I am very pro education and I was a very involved parent in my child's life.

A few years ago, my husband was diagnosed with cancer. I had to leave work to become his primary caretaker until he died.

After his death, I had a stroke. With no income and the stroke, I did not have money to afford housing and I became homeless.

Luckily, because of my service to my country, I received a special housing voucher several years ago for honorably discharged veterans called a VASH Voucher.

I was told this voucher would enable me to live where I wanted. **Boy, was I wrong.**

I started looking in Anne Arundel County first, but could not find a landlord to take my VASH voucher. Then, I started looking for housing in Baltimore County. I tried many buildings and they all said "no Section 8." I had to move to the Randallstown region of Baltimore County where I did not want to live, because I was about to lose my voucher if I did not use it.

After several years in Randallstown, I moved to Annapolis. I no longer use a voucher to rent my home. I want to be clear – many of us are not on vouchers forever. I have been renting my home in Annapolis for 2 years without my voucher and I am now looking into homeownership. The voucher just helped me at a critical time in my life. I am the same person today that I was when I had the voucher.

I am a U.S. veteran – I signed on the line to protect my fellow citizens and I did so honorably. I have NO Criminal Record. Discrimination was never acceptable.

For all these reasons, and so no one else has to experience this kind of discrimination in Maryland, I urge you to issue a FAVORABLE REPORT on SB 530, the HOME Act. Thank you.