



Maryland Senior Citizens Action Network

MSCAN

AARP Maryland

Alzheimer's Association,
Maryland Chapters

Baltimore Jewish Council

Catholic Charities

Central Maryland
Ecumenical Council

Church of the Brethren

Episcopal Diocese of
Maryland

Housing Opportunities
Commission of
Montgomery County

Jewish Community
Relations Council of
Greater Washington

Lutheran Office on Public
Policy in Maryland

Maryland Association of
Area Agencies on Aging

Maryland Association of
Senior Centers

Maryland Catholic
Conference

Maryland State
Conference, NAACP

Mental Health Association
of Maryland

Mid-Atlantic LifeSpan

National Association of
Social Workers, Maryland
Chapter

Presbytery of Baltimore

St. Vincent de Paul Society

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Comments in Support of SB 530
Housing Opportunities Made Equal Act
Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
February 4, 2020

MSCAN is a coalition of advocacy groups, service providers, faith-based and mission driven organizations that advocates for policies that meet the housing and care needs of Maryland's low and moderate-income senior citizens. **We appreciate the opportunity to offer our comment in support SB 530.**

SB 530 prohibits landlords from discriminating based on an applicant's legal source of income, and low-income senior citizens will benefit greatly from the passage of this legislation. In Maryland, 178,100 low-income households pay more than half of their monthly income for rent, and 30% of these households are elderly and/or disabled households.¹

The Housing Choice Voucher program is an essential tool to help low-income seniors with rental expenses. **In Maryland, nearly 1 in 5 of housing choice voucher ("Section 8") recipients are elderly.**² Unfortunately, not all landlords are willing to accept the vouchers, which results in seniors being denied housing. This denial is not based on their previous rental history, their credit worthiness, or any other legitimate factor for screening tenants. They are being denied housing simply because the landlord is unwilling to accept a legal source of income. Ultimately, this leads to concentrated poverty and economic isolation of seniors.

The Housing Choice Voucher program - and other rental assistance programs - are designed so that the most vulnerable in our society can have access to housing, which is a fundamental basic need. Don't we owe it to our seniors to ensure they can actually utilize the voucher they have been provided?

With appreciation for your consideration of the need for action, MSCAN respectfully requests your favorable vote on SB 530.

¹ Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. (2019). Maryland Federal Rental Assistance Fact Sheet. <https://www.cbpp.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/12-10-19hous-factsheet-md.pdf>

² Ibid.