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Maryland Family Network

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Marylanders Against Poverty

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TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 928

Discrimination in Housing - Citizenship, Immigration Status, and National Origin

House Environment and Transportation Committee

February 22, 2022

Submitted by Julia Gross and Kali Schumitz, Co-Chairs

Marylanders Against Poverty (MAP) strongly supports HB 928, which would prohibit housing discrimination based on citizenship or immigration status.

For Maryland families, safe and reliable housing provides the stability needed to secure and maintain employment. Simple luxuries - from showers to kitchens - allow individuals to concentrate on their careers, education, and future. The inability to locate housing because of citizenship or immigration status is therefore a barrier for some of Marylanders most vulnerable individuals and families who are trying to build a life and home for themselves in our state.

Poor housing is intricately connected to poor health outcomes – especially for families who are most likely to face discrimination and poverty. Many low-income Marylanders are forced to live in substandard housing with pest infestations, lead paint exposure, and indoor allergens. Simultaneously, these low-income families live in neighborhoods deficient in green space, access to healthy foods, safe places to play, and efficient transportation.

When families are unable to locate landlords willing to rent or sell to them based on citizenship or immigration status, there are often no state or federal supports in place for these families to turn to, which is why this bill and the protections it provide are critical to the overall health and economic stability of Maryland communities.

MAP appreciates your consideration and urges the committee to issue a favorable report for HB 928.

Marylanders Against Poverty (MAP) is a coalition of service providers, faith communities, and advocacy organizations advancing statewide public policies and programs necessary to alleviate the burdens faced by Marylanders living in or near poverty, and to address the underlying systemic causes of poverty.