



Testimony in SUPPORT of HB928
Discrimination in Housing - Citizenship, Immigration Status, and National Origin
House Environment & Transportation Committee
Ashanti Martinez, On Behalf of CASA

February 18, 2022

Dear Committee Chair Barve and Committee Members,

CASA writes to register testimony in support of HB 928, which updates the state's housing discrimination policy, bringing protections one step closer towards housing justice and strengthening the rights of the Maryland immigrant community.

CASA is the region's largest immigrant rights organization serving over 120,000 Black and brown immigrant and working families. Over the last thirty years, CASA has worked with hundreds of thousands of Marylanders on renter rights and housing issues through organizing, advocacy and legal services. Our mission is to create a more just society by building power and improving the quality of life in working class and immigrant communities.

Establishing explicit protections for citizenship, immigration status, and national origin is essential for protecting immigrant renters and prevent exploitation of families who share varying immigration status'. The COVID-19 pandemic has illustrated the ongoing housing crisis that tenants face and critical secure housing is in the health determinants and life outcomes of our residents. The passage of HB 928 would align Maryland with several other states including CA, CO, IL, and WA in protecting against discrimination in the renting or home buying process for Maryland's most marginalized residents. Welcoming communities are a hallmark of Maryland and HB 928 ensures that we continue to live up to that promise. Another key provision of the bill would prohibit landlords and others from weaponizing a resident's Citizenship, Immigration Status, and National Origin by barring any sharing of this information with federal immigration authorities.

HB 928 is the right solution for updating our states housing discrimination policy by deterring bad actors from discriminating against Citizenship, Immigration Status, and National Origin. CASA strongly supports this bill and respectfully urges a favorable committee report. Thank you.

Respectfully submitted,

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