



House Bill 826 – Statewide Rental Assistance Voucher Program -- Establishment

Position: Favorable

Maryland REALTORS® support HB 826 which would establish a rental assistance program for low-income families who qualify for the federal housing choice voucher program but are put on a waiting list.

The Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development published a housing needs assessment in 2020 which concluded that Maryland has a deficit of 85,000 rental units for its lowest income citizens. The Maryland REALTORS® estimate that a general housing shortage of 120,000 exists for all families in the state. This chronic undersupply makes housing more expensive.

One of the federal programs which helps poorer families deal with housing costs is the federal housing choice voucher program. Eligible families receive payments to help with their rent costs and it those payments that often mean the difference between housing or homelessness. While the housing voucher program is well established, thousands of Maryland families qualify for the program but end up on waiting lists that can be year's long.

HB 826 helps address the waiting list problem by creating funding for a state program that will provide voucher assistance to families on the housing choice voucher waiting lists. The assistance is provided for up to 5 years or until the family starts receiving federal assistance.

The Maryland REALTORS® believes HB 826 helps tenants and landlords and recommends a favorable report.

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