

TONY BRIDGES
Legislative District 41
Baltimore City

Appropriations Committee



The Maryland House of Delegates
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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

To: The Honorable Members of the Environment and Transportation Committee

From: Delegate Tony Bridges, Legislative District 41

Re: **Support** - House Bill 1121 - Real Property - Residential Contracts of Sale - Buyer Privacy

Date: March 7th, 2023

Chair Barve, Vice-Chair Stein, and members of the Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to present House Bill 1121. This legislation is for the purpose of removing bias, intentional or otherwise, in housing decisions. House Bill 1121 will protect buyer privacy by requiring that single-family residential contracts cannot contain the name of a buyer prior to the time of contract acceptance.

With technology advancing a name should be considered privileged information. A name is a roadmap to who we are, where we have come from, who we hold dear, what is important to us, what has happened in our lives, and what we value. A buyer's name can hold information about the buyer's race, religion, national origin and sex. A buyer's name can also be used to uncover information including information about a buyer's sexual orientation, handicap and political opinion. This information is not only irrelevant when it comes to decisions related to housing, but it may encourage or support discriminatory decisions, implicit or otherwise. Buyers need to be protected against sharing this information.

This bill is the first of its kind in the real estate industry, but it is not the first in name of the protections of privacy and privacy rights. A buyer's name can reveal information about their race and ethnicity which are included among federal protected classes. Maryland annotated code provides for the protection of federal and locally protected classes.

Prohibiting names from being on single-family residential contracts is needed to protect buyers from bias and discrimination. For these reasons and others you will hear from stakeholders, I respectfully ask the committee for a favorable report.