



February 28, 2023

House – Environment and Transportation

HB 826

**Housing and Community Development – Statewide Rental Assistance Voucher Program --
Establishment**

POSITION: SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENTS

HB 826 is a ground-breaking proposal that would create a statewide Rental Assistance Voucher Program which would provide tenant based rental assistance for low-income Marylanders and prioritize specific populations for this rental assistance. This would constitute a significant investment in the goal of ensuring low-income families have housing opportunities and would produce many of the positive social and economic benefits associated with affordable housing.

The intent of this legislation is to replicate the federal housing choice voucher (“Section 8”), which is a critical tool for providing housing opportunities for low income renters. While we support the creation of a statewide Rental Assistance Voucher Program similar to the federal housing voucher program, as drafted, HB 826 does not include the protections that federal regulations provide to families. Without amendment to include those protections, specific rights enshrined in federal statutes and regulations will be unavailable to participants in the Statewide Rental Assistance Voucher Program.

A Statewide Rental Voucher Program would be a tremendous first step by Maryland to address the housing crisis facing low-income Marylanders that would be made even better with amendments to ensure the protections provided to holders of federal housing vouchers are provided to holders of State vouchers as well.

For the foregoing reasons, we urge a **FAVORABLE REPORT WITH AMENDMENTS** on HB 826.