



February 19, 2024

Chairman Korman, Vice Chair Boyce, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you very much for the opportunity to provide written testimony in support of the Housing Expansion and Affordability Act (HB0538). I will keep these remarks brief.

My name is Stacy Kaplowitz, and I am a Rockville resident and a mother of two MCPS students. I serve as the incoming Chair on the Rockville Housing Enterprises Board and as a mentor in the Housing Association of Nonprofit Developers (HAND) GenerationHAND program. Further, I am Vice President/Managing Partner of Lincoln Avenue Communities. Lincoln Avenue Communities (LAC) is one of the nation's leading developers, investors, and operators of affordable and workforce housing, providing high-quality, sustainable homes for lower- and moderate-income individuals, seniors, and families nationwide. We are a mission-driven organization serving residents across twenty-six states. We currently own more than 136 affordable rental communities providing homes for over 25,000 families and seniors.

I strongly support the passage of HB0538. The Housing Expansion and Affordability Act comes at a critical time when our state's affordable housing crisis continues to deepen. As a Maryland resident and affordable housing advocate who deeply cares about the well-being and prosperity of our communities, I believe this legislation presents a crucial opportunity to remove onerous regulatory hurdles and outdated and often discriminatory zoning and land use policies that have held our communities back from prospering for decades.

This legislation is an important step in dismantling restrictive land use policies like the Adequate Public Facility Ordinances (APFO), which have perpetuated redlining, exacerbating Maryland's affordable housing crisis. With the passage of HB0538, NIMBYs can no longer use the APFO 'test' as a weapon to fight new or expanded affordable housing development. Density bonuses and expedited entitlement and permitting are critical tools that will be a catalyst for new, transit-oriented, affordable housing development.

Housing affordability isn't just an issue for *some* people, it is a basic need for *all* people. We have a shortage of nearly 100,000 affordable homes in Maryland, adding 5,600 more to that shortage each year. Fair and transparent land use policies are critical in addressing our housing crisis. HB0538 will help to dismantle existing barriers that keep us from achieving that basic need for all Marylanders.

The Housing Expansion and Affordability Act is an important step in the right direction.

Thank you for your leadership.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Stacy Kaplowitz". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Stacy Kaplowitz