

JACQUELINE T. ADDISON
Legislative District 45
Baltimore City

Environment and
Transportation Committee

Subcommittees

Natural Resources, Agriculture,
and Open Space

Motor Vehicles and Transportation

Local Government and
Bi-County Agencies



The Maryland House of Delegates
6 Bladen Street, Room 317
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
410-841-3551 · 301-858-3551
800-492-7122 Ext. 3551
Jackie.Addison@house.state.md.us

THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Environment and Transportation Committee

Chair Korman; Vice Chair Boyce

Date: March 5, 2024

Sponsor: Delegate Addison; Tiarra Goodwin

Position: Favorable

Title: HB1325 Individuals Experiencing Homelessness - Address Requirements – Prohibition

Good Afternoon Chairman Korman, Vice Chair Boyce, and members of the Environment and Transportation Committee.

For the record, my name is Tiarra Goodwin, chief of staff to Delegate Jackie T. Addison. I am here to testify on HB1325 which aims to prohibit a public library, a recipient of a certain award from the Department of Housing and Community Development, the Department, a public housing agency, a county, or a municipality from requiring an individual experiencing homelessness to provide a current address.

As Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King eloquently phrased, “It’s all right to tell a man to lift himself by his own bootstraps, but it is cruel jest to say to a bootless man that he ought to lift himself by his own bootstraps. “This bill will aid in lowering barriers for homeless individuals who are outcast from society with no pathway to “pull themselves up by the bootstraps”.

To achieve this, the bill will permit homeless individuals (as defined in the under the Federal McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act) to access free public services and resources from libraries. It will waive the address requirement for things such as a library card, renting books, and e-cards for digital access.

Currently, Enoch Pratt does have a flexible proof of ID and residency policy; however, it does not account for those who do not stay at shelters or experience issues with obtaining a letter from their last shelter. Despite there being exceptions made by Enoch Pratt Library to be more inclusive; all shelters are not required to allow homeless individuals to use the address. Also, some shelters have program stipulations or term duration requirements to allow address use.

The Department of Housing and Community Development does require state-funded shelters to allow individuals use the address and receive mail there. Approximately 68 of 192 shelters in the

state permit use. In regard to the Housing Choice Voucher Programs, some of the eligibility requirements for admission rely heavily on tenant history/screening, income, and other factors that don't account for those who have been homeless for long periods of time.

Often, employers are unknowingly discriminating against a class of people due proof of residency stipulations or discrepancies with providing both proof of residency and photo identification. The bill will waive the address requirements to apply for jobs in local government.

The homeless population includes people of different skillsets, former professions, and prior contributions to Maryland as taxpayers. Housing should not be the deciding factor of whether you are able to reassimilate back into society or not. The people that are currently homeless were once our neighbors, co-workers, friends, defenders of enemies both domestic and abroad, and taxpayers who paid just like the rest of us to enjoy public funded services. We the People, by way of the constitution have certain inalienable rights such as Life, Liberty, and Pursuit of Happiness. In the words of Dr. King, "if a man doesn't have a job or an income, he has neither life nor liberty nor the possibility for the pursuit of happiness. He merely exists."

Thank you, Chairman Korman and Vice Chair Boyce. I respectfully request a favorable report on HB1325.

Warm regards,

Tiarra Goodwin