



**Testimony to the House Environment and Transportation Committee  
HB1325 Individuals Experiencing Homelessness - Address Requirements - Prohibition**

**Position: Favorable**

2/29/2024

The Honorable Delegate Korman, Chair  
Environment and Transportation Committee  
Room 251  
House Office Building  
Annapolis, MD 21401  
CC: Members of the House Environment and Transportation Committee

Economic Action Maryland (formerly the Maryland Consumer Rights Coalition) is a people-centered movement to expand economic rights, housing justice, and community reinvestment for working families, low-income communities, and communities of color. Economic Action Maryland provides direct assistance today while passing legislation and regulations to create systemic change in the future.

I am writing today to urge your favorable report on HB1325, which would expand access to publicly funded support for individuals experiencing homelessness.

First, this bill would prohibit public libraries from requiring individuals facing homelessness to provide an address in order to receive a library card. As the daughter of a public librarian, this is an issue that is close to my heart. Public libraries hold access to a variety of necessary resources, most importantly being public computers, which are vital for low-income individuals without access to technology at home, since applications for nearly everything are online. Librarians provide a number of services outside of the scope of the literary world, and will even take the time to look over and edit resumés. However, a majority of these services require an individual to hold a free library card, which in some library branches, can only be acquired through providing an address.

By establishing that public libraries may not require an address from an individual facing homelessness in order to acquire a library card, these many resources will become available to these individuals who need these kinds of resources the most. Considering that the Baltimore County Public Library System already has such an accommodation for individuals experiencing homelessness, it would not be difficult for other branches to follow suit.

Additionally, this bill ensures that individuals facing homelessness have a better chance at accessing affordable housing by prohibiting recipients of grants and loans awarded by the Department of Housing and Community Development from requiring a current address on affordable housing applications.

This is common sense legislation, people experiencing homelessness deserve access to resources that can help them get back on their feet and keep them out of homelessness. Your favorable report expresses a commitment to addressing the needs of one of the most vulnerable populations in the state. For these reasons we urge a favorable report on HB1325.

Sincerely,  
Zoe Gallagher, Policy Associate