



## **Senate Bill 57 – Evidence – Wiretapping and Electronic Surveillance – Fair Housing Testing**

### **Position: Support**

Maryland REALTORS® takes all allegations of discrimination in the housing market seriously. As a result, we offer our support for SB 57, to allow for greater testing of potential fair housing violations in the state.

While the federal Fair Housing Act was passed 56 years ago, reports of discrimination persist today in areas of the home buying and selling process, as well as in the provision of rental housing. The Maryland Commission on Civil Rights 2023 Annual Report outlines continued Fair Housing complaints in the areas of disability discrimination, harassment, and race, and that those inquiring about possible discrimination are disproportionately Black, Muslim, and Female.

When this bill was introduced in the 2023 Session, Maryland REALTORS® requested amendments to more clearly define which organizations could use wire and video surveillance and for what purposes such testing may be conducted. SB 57 includes both of those clarifications, and now more closely aligns with federal requirements as instituted by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

At all levels of the REALTOR® organization, there is a renewed awareness of those issues, and a determined focus on addressing them. We thank the sponsor for his efforts to reduce any bias which may occur in the housing market and respectfully ask for your support of Senate Bill 57.

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