



SB 327 : Affordable Housing Payment In Lieu of Taxes Expansion Act

Testimony of the Maryland Independent Living Network

SUPPORT

Senate Budget & Taxation Committee, January 29, 2025

The Maryland Independent Living Network is a coalition of the Maryland Statewide Independent Living Council and the seven Maryland-based Centers for Independent Living (CIL). CILs are created by federal law. CILs work to enhance the civil rights and quality of services for people with disabilities. There are seven CILs located throughout Maryland, operated by and for people with disabilities. CILs provide Information and Referral, Advocacy, Peer Support, Independent Living Skills training, and Transition Services to individuals with disabilities in their communities.

The Independent Living Network submits this written testimony in **support** of SB 327.

SB 327 authorizes county governments to exempt real property used for rental housing from the county property tax if the property owner maintains at least 50% of the rental housing units as affordable dwelling units and enters into a payment in lieu of taxes (PILOT) agreement with the county government. The PILOT agreement must require the property owner to maintain at least 50% of the rental housing units as affordable dwelling units for a period of at least 15 years.

People with disabilities are experiencing a housing crisis.

The need for affordable and accessible housing for people with disabilities is well documented. When the Americans with Disabilities Act was passed in 1990, Congress recognized that housing discrimination against individuals with disabilities was a serious and pervasive social problem.

A 2016 Maryland Department of Health survey found that having a disability was more prevalent among lower income households, where more than one-half of persons living with a disability had a household income of less than \$15,000.

The recent "State Disabilities Plan", by the Maryland Department of Disabilities, identifies the need for "Improved availability of integrated, affordable, and accessible housing options for people with disabilities and their households."

CILs know people with disabilities, who comprise a disproportionate share of those Marylanders with extremely low incomes, who must sacrifice food and healthcare to pay rent, or who live in substandard or overcrowded conditions or experience unstable housing and evictions.

Due to the lack of affordable, accessible housing in the community, many individuals are at risk of institutionalization, homelessness, or are stuck in nursing facilities.

The Maryland Independent Living Network supports efforts to increase the availability of affordable housing across the state.

The Maryland Independent Living Network appreciates the consideration of these comments.

The Maryland Independent Living Network strongly **supports** SB 327 and urges a **favorable** report.

Contact Information:

Chris Kelter, Executive Director
Accessible Resources for Independence
443-713-3914
ckelter@arinow.org

Danielle Bustos, MDYLF Coordinator
Independence Now
240-898-2189
dbustos@innow.org