



Bill: **House Bill 896 – Human Relations - Discrimination in Housing - Income-Based Housing Subsidies**

Committee: **Environment and Transportation**

Date: **February 18, 2025**

Position: **Unfavorable**

The Apartment and Office Building Association (AOBA) of Metropolitan Washington is a non-profit trade association representing the owners and managers of more than 23 million square feet of commercial office space and 133,000 apartment rental units in Montgomery and Prince George's counties. AOBA submits the following testimony in opposition to House Bill 896.

HB 896 would prohibit housing providers from considering a prospective tenant's income or credit score if the tenant receives low-income housing subsidies. AOBA opposes this bill because responsible property management requires thorough tenant screening to ensure that rental obligations can be met consistently. Credit scores and income verification are standard, objective measures that allow housing providers to make fair and informed decisions.

Housing assistance programs typically do not cover the full cost of the tenant's rent. By prohibiting a housing provider's ability to consider income and credit history, the bill removes an essential tool for determining a tenant's ability to pay their share of the rent. Even when a tenant's housing assistance covers their entire rent, the tenant's circumstances can and do change. A tenant may lose their assistance due to changes in income or eligibility requirements. Without the ability to assess financial stability, housing providers are left vulnerable to nonpayment of rent.

For these reasons, AOBA urges an unfavorable report on House Bill 896. For more information, please contact Brian Anleu at banleu@aoba-metro.org.