



SB 107: Evidence - Interception of Oral Communications - Fair Housing Testing

Testimony of the Maryland Independent Living Network

SUPPORT

Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee, January 15, 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 107.

People with disabilities are a protected class under the federal and state housing and accommodation laws.

Fair housing complaints are disproportionately filed by people with disabilities. Nearly half of housing complaints reported to the U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development in 2019 were disability-based.

Accordingly, the disproportionate number of complaints that are disability-based indicates that fair housing is not readily available for people with disabilities. For inclusive housing in Maryland to be more readily available, wider testing of fair housing and appropriate evidence gathering authority is needed.

SB 107 permits the collection of oral communication as evidence if an individual is working as a fair housing tester in a fair housing testing program in certain circumstances and that evidence may be used for the purpose of enforcing federal, State and local fair housing laws.

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

The Maryland Independent Living Network strongly **supports** SB 107 and urges a **favorable** report.

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