



House Bill 487 – Unhoused Individuals – Rights, Civil Action, and Affirmative Defense

Position: Unfavorable

Maryland REALTORS® strongly supports addressing the housing crisis that impact many Maryland residents and their communities. However, the REALTORS® oppose certain provisions of HB 487 that impact private property.

As drafted, HB 487 would impact private property and require private citizens to dedicate their property and resources to reduce homelessness. The definition of “Public Place” includes property that is “leased” in part by state or local government. Some state and local governments lease parts of private buildings which could force these properties the bill’s requirements. Additionally, the bill defines the following spaces as “Public:”

- Courtyards;
- Sidewalks;
- Parking lots;
- Shopping centers.

Under HB 487, unhoused individuals would have rights to occupy some of this private property as long they do not obstruct “normal movement” in a manner that creates a “hazard” to others. That standard means unhoused individuals could obstruct some movement in private courtyards, parking lots, sidewalks as long as it was not deemed hazardous. In addition, unhoused individuals would be able to store personal property on some private property.

The Maryland REALTORS® believe the solution to homelessness should not be forcing private property to backfill the services that should be the responsibility of government and all taxpayers.

For these reasons, the Maryland REALTORS® recommend an unfavorable report.

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