



Senate Bill 168 – State Department of Assessments and Taxation - Blockchain-Based Real Property Title Pilot Program - Establishment

Position: Support

Maryland REALTORS® supports SB 168, which would create a pilot program to explore the use of blockchain technology to combat the practice of real estate “squatting.”

Over the past few years, REALTORS® have reported increased incidents of squatting in residential properties, typically those that are vacant or listed for sale or rent, but also those where an owner is temporarily away. Scammers that have no legal rights to the property illegally occupy these residences.

Often, these individuals produce forged leases or other documents which on initial review might indicate they have a right to occupy the residence. When these documents are presented to law enforcement responding to the squatting situation, it can be difficult to determine who has rightful ownership. As a result, property owners are told that this is a matter for the courts, and it may be weeks or months before the property is restored to them.

The General Assembly took steps in 2025, through SB 46, to provide additional recourse for victims of squatting to seek relief from the courts in an expedited manner. REALTORS® view SB 168 as a continuation of those efforts.

Blockchain technology has shown promise in reducing fraud in other areas of real estate, including in seller impersonation and deed fraud, as well as with vacant properties in Baltimore. This pilot program can determine its application to combatting fraudulent activities surrounding squatting and, as a result, Maryland REALTORS® asks for your favorable report.

For more information contact lisa.may@mdrealtor.org or christa.mcgee@mdrealtor.org