

Robin Truiett-Theodorsen
Chairperson | Board of Commissioners

Janet Abrahams
President | Chief Executive Officer



February 19, 2026

TO: Members of the Judicial Proceedings
FROM: Janet Abrahams, HABC President & CEO 
RE: HB 573 – Fair Housing and Housing Discrimination – Regulations, Intent, and Discriminatory Effect

POSITION: Support with Amendments

Chair Valderrama, Vice Chair Charkoudian and Members of the Economic Matters Committee, please be advised that the Housing Authority of Baltimore City wishes to submit testimony on HB 573 – Fair Housing and Housing Discrimination – Regulations, Intent, and Discriminatory Effect

The Housing Authority of Baltimore City (HABC) is one of the largest public housing authorities (PHAs) in the country and Baltimore City's largest provider of affordable housing opportunities. HABC serves over 46,000 individuals in Baltimore City through its Public Housing and Housing Choice Voucher programs, which help to house low- to extremely low-income families and individuals that consist of some of the city's most vulnerable populations, including those at risk of homelessness, the elderly, people with disabilities, veterans, and families with children. HABC's public housing inventory currently consists of approximately 6,000 units in developments and scattered sites throughout Baltimore City. Our Housing Choice Voucher Program (HCVP) provides subsidies to households to rent quality affordable housing in the private market. HABC currently assists nearly 22,000 households through HCVP with over 2,800 landlords participating in the program.

HB 573 – Fair Housing and Housing Discrimination – Regulations, Intent, and Discriminatory Effect proposes to authorize the Department of Housing and Community Development to adopt certain regulations related to affirmatively furthering fair housing; providing that certain discriminatory housing practices may be committed without intent; prohibiting a person from acting in a certain manner that has a discriminatory effect; and providing that certain conduct necessary to achieve certain nondiscriminatory interest does not constitute a certain violation.

HABC supports efforts to eliminate housing discrimination, whether intentional or unintentional. Every resident deserves equal access to safe, affordable housing and a fair process when concerns arise. State regulations related to affirmatively fair housing can provide a framework to replace inconsistent federal policies to ensure more effective and locally tailored approaches to creating equitable housing opportunities.

Housing Authority of Baltimore City | 417 East Fayette Street, Baltimore, MD 21202

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Requested Amendments:

HABC proposes to remove the reference to “housing authorities” in Section 2-402 (b) (1) and (2) and (c) (1) and (2). HABC neither collects nor maintains the type of information related to the assessment of affirmatively furthering fair housing referenced in this bill. HABC has historically worked with the City of Baltimore and other stakeholders to perform analyses of impediments to fair housing and can support the political subdivisions analysis and submission, but we don’t have the data or means to submit our own assessment. Therefore, in addition to striking the references to housing authorities proposed above, HABC also proposes adding the following language to the end of Section 2-402 (b) (2):
“Housing Authorities will support the political subdivision in the assessment of fair housing.”

We request a favorable report on HB 691 with amendments.

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