

**FAVORABLE Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 335  
Landlord and Tenant – Discrimination in Housing for Income-Based  
Housing Subsidies and Positive Rental History Reporting**

**Economic Matters  
April 2, 2026  
1:00 pm**

**Jocelyn I. Collins  
Public Policy Partners, on behalf of MSEA**

The Maryland State Education Association (MSEA) supports Senate Bill 335, which strengthens Maryland's fair housing laws by prohibiting discrimination against renters who use income-based housing subsidies, including housing choice vouchers and other public or nonprofit rental assistance programs. The bill also establishes a new framework to support tenants in building credit through the optional reporting of positive rental payment history. Together, these provisions close gaps in existing protections and expand access to housing opportunities and financial stability.

Specifically, Senate Bill 335 would prohibit a landlord from refusing to rent to a prospective tenant solely because the tenant uses an income-based housing subsidy. The bill also clarifies that landlords may not rely on adverse credit history that occurred during periods when a tenant did not receive a subsidy, unless certain documentation confirms those periods. At the same time, the legislation preserves landlords' ability to apply reasonable, nondiscriminatory screening criteria, including verification of sufficient income for the tenant's portion of rent and consideration of rental history, lease violations, or property damage.

Importantly, the bill also requires landlords to offer tenants the option to have their positive rental payment history reported to a consumer reporting agency. This optional reporting mechanism provides tenants with an opportunity to build or improve their credit through consistent, on-time rent payments, which can expand future access to housing, credit, and economic mobility. The bill establishes clear



guidelines for how this option must be offered, ensures that participation is voluntary, and places reasonable limits on any associated fees.

Violations of the bill's anti-discrimination provisions would be treated as discriminatory housing practices enforceable by the Maryland Commission on Civil Rights. These combined measures are critical to ensuring meaningful access to housing rather than nominal protections that can be easily circumvented.

MSEA's support for this legislation is grounded in MSEA Resolution F.23 – Fair Housing, which states: "MSEA believes that fair housing practices should be broadened and strengthened to assure each citizen an equal opportunity to reside in a neighborhood of their choice." Senate Bill 335 directly advances this principle by addressing discriminatory practices and promoting pathways to financial stability that disproportionately impact low-income families, communities of color, and working families.

MSEA represents 76,000 educators and school employees who work in Maryland's public schools and community colleges, teaching and supporting our almost 900,000 K-12 students so they can pursue their dreams. MSEA represents more than 44 local affiliates in every county across Maryland, and our parent affiliate is the 3-million-member National Education Association (NEA).

Our members witness firsthand the consequences of housing instability and housing discrimination on students and school communities. When families are denied housing based on income source or past financial hardship, they often experience repeated moves, overcrowded living situations, or homelessness. These challenges directly affect students' academic performance, attendance, social-emotional well-being, and ability to engage in their education fully.

Students who experience frequent housing disruptions are more likely to change school's midyear, lose access to specialized services, and struggle to form stable relationships with peers and educators. Educators, in turn, face additional challenges supporting students whose basic needs for safety and stability are unmet. By promoting stable and equitable access to housing—and by enabling families to



build credit through positive rental payment reporting—Senate Bill 335 supports stronger school communities and improves the conditions necessary for effective teaching and learning.

Senate Bill 335 also promotes broader community stability. When families can access housing in neighborhoods of their choice and build financial credibility through consistent rent payments, communities benefit from reduced displacement, stronger family engagement in schools, and increased economic and social integration. These outcomes align with Maryland’s commitment to equity and civil rights and reinforce the interconnectedness of housing policy and educational opportunity.

We urge the committee to issue a Favorable Report on Senate Bill 335.