



**HEALTH CARE FOR THE HOMELESS TESTIMONY**  
**FAVORABLE**

**HB 239 – Land Use - Zoning - Limitations (Starter and Silver Homes Act of 2026)**

**House Economic Matters Committee**  
**February 12, 2026**

**Health Care for the Homeless supports HB 239**, which would prohibit jurisdictions in the state from excluding higher density housing through zoning laws and other arbitrary criteria. By allowing smaller, single-family homes on smaller lots, allowing townhouses in residential areas statewide, and making it easier to split up parcels of land to build more homes, this bill would increase housing options by allowing smaller, more affordable homes.

Health Care for the Homeless is Maryland’s leading provider of integrated health services and supportive housing for individuals and families experiencing homelessness. We deliver integrated medical care, behavioral health services, dental care and harm reduction interventions for more than 11,000 people annually at multiple clinic sites in Baltimore City and Baltimore County and through a Mobile Clinic and Street Medicine team. We also support more than 800 highly vulnerable Baltimoreans in more than 550 units of permanent supportive housing.

We believe that everyone deserves a home they can afford in a stable and healthy community, but with our State’s exorbitant housing costs, rental housing is unaffordable and homeownership is out of reach for too many Marylanders. 1 in 3 Maryland families are cost burdened by their monthly rent or mortgage payment, including 53% of Maryland renters who pay more than 30% of their income on rent.<sup>1</sup> Reforms proposed by HB 239 helps our State create higher density housing, which is desperately needed to address the affordable housing crisis.

By prohibiting local jurisdictions from adopting or enforcing arbitrary and exclusionary zoning provisions will make it possible to increase density and contribute to more equitable access to affordable housing for Marylanders. We urge a favorable report.

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*Our Vision: Everyone is healthy and has a safe home in a just and respectful community.*

*Our Mission: We work to end homelessness through racially equitable health care, housing and advocacy in partnership with those of us who have experienced it.*

*For more information about our agency, visit [www.hchmd.org](http://www.hchmd.org).*

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<sup>1</sup>[United States Census Bureau](https://www.census.gov)