

**FAVORABLE Testimony in Support of House Bill 315
Human Relations - Discrimination in Housing - Income-Based Housing
Subsidies**

**Economic Matters
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1:00 pm**

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The Maryland State Education Association (MSEA) **supports House Bill 315**, 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. This legislation closes gaps in existing protections and ensures that families who rely on lawful rental assistance are not unfairly excluded from housing opportunities based on the source of their income or financial circumstances tied to periods of housing instability.

Specifically, House Bill 315 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 prevents landlords from relying on a tenant's income level, credit score, or adverse credit history that occurred during a time when the tenant did not receive an income-based housing subsidy. Importantly, violations would be treated as discriminatory housing practices enforceable by the Maryland Commission on Civil Rights. These provisions 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.*" House Bill 315 directly advances this principle by addressing discriminatory practices that disproportionately impact low-income



families, communities of color, and working families who rely on rental assistance to secure stable housing.

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 the state of 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 fully engage in their education.

Students who experience frequent housing disruptions are more likely to change schools 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, House Bill 315 supports stronger school communities and improves the conditions necessary for effective teaching and learning.

House Bill 315 also promotes broader community stability. When families are able to access housing in neighborhoods of their choice, 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 House Bill 315.