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To: Members of the House Economic Matters Committee
From: Jim Pauli and Cynthia Lifson, Co-Chairs, Legislative Committee, Maryland State Bar Association's Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) Section Council
Date: March 10, 2026
Subject: Support - House Bill No. 1436 - Office of the Attorney General - Federal- and State-Assisted Housing Programs - Grievance Process

Dear Chair and Committee Members:

House Bill 1436 establishes a grievance process within the Office of the Attorney General for participants in federal- and state-assisted housing programs. The Alternative Dispute Resolution Section of the Maryland State Bar Association supports House Bill 1436.

Access to safe and stable housing is foundational to individual well-being, family stability, and economic mobility. Thousands of Maryland residents rely on federally and state-assisted housing programs to meet their basic housing needs. However, when disputes arise between program participants and housing providers, tenants often face significant barriers to obtaining fair resolution. These are amongst the most vulnerable citizens because they rely on public housing, vouchers, and sometimes shelters to avoid being homeless. These residents lack the financial resources to retain private legal representation and often lack the procedural knowledge necessary to effectively challenge improper actions. Furthermore, these residents may be intimidated and fearful of retaliation from their landlord.

House Bill 1436 addresses this knowledge gap and provides support to these vulnerable residents by creating a clear and accessible process for them to submit grievances regarding the administration of these housing programs. Under House Bill 1436, the Office of the Attorney General would investigate individual complaints, facilitate mediation between the parties to find resolution, and provide information about available legal resources to support Maryland consumers. Further, the Office of the Attorney General will have a full view of these grievances and the authority to enforce the law when patterns and practices of violations are discovered. This structure helps ensure that grievances are reviewed by a neutral authority with the authority to promote fair outcomes.

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We strongly believe House Bill 1436 promotes transparency and accountability. By requiring housing providers to notify clients of the grievance process and requiring annual reporting to the General Assembly on the number and outcomes of grievances, the legislation creates a framework for identifying systemic issues and improving program administration across the state.

Importantly, the proposed grievance process does not replace existing legal remedies but instead provides an additional avenue for early intervention and dispute resolution. By encouraging mediation and timely investigation, the legislation may reduce costly litigation while resolving disputes more efficiently for both tenants and housing providers.

For the reasons stated above, **the MSBA ADR Section supports HB 1436 and urges a favorable committee report.** Should you have any questions, please contact either Gary C. Norman, Esq. L.L.M. ADR Section Chair at (410) 241-6745 or James Pauli, Section Vice Chair at (301) 452-0449 or at his e-mail address: jim.pauli.ijs@gmail.com.