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DATE: February 5, 2026
BILL NO: House Bill 313
TITLE: Landlord and Tenant - Residential Housing - Rental Applications and Tenant Screening
COMMITTEE: House Economic Matters

Letter of Support

Description of Bill:

House Bill 313 establishes tenant protections during the rental process and tenant screening. It would limit when landlords may collect application or screening fees, require landlords to provide upfront notice and documentation, and allow tenants to dispute inaccurate or incomplete information in the tenant screening reports. It also prohibits landlords from considering certain court proceedings or protected records in rental decisions as it would be a classified violation of unfair or deceptive trade practices enforced under the Maryland Consumer Protection Act.

Background and Analysis:

Tenant screening reports are widely used by landlords to evaluate prospective renters, including their credit history, past rental behavior, and other financial information. These reports are often produced by private tenant screening companies and can include errors or outdated information. Shielded or sealed records, such as those from court proceedings or previous evictions, are legally protected and should not be used to influence rental decisions, since these reports are not a reliable predictor of one's ability or intent to pay rent.

The bill would not prohibit landlords from screening prospective tenants or evaluating financial risk. Rather, it promotes clearer communication and ensures that rental decisions are based on accurate information. By increasing transparency in the process, this may additionally reduce disputes, complaints and violations, benefiting both tenants and landlords.

House Bill 313 is composed of provisions that ensure prospective tenants the ability to dispute inaccurate or incomplete information and promotes more equitable access to housing, particularly for low-income tenants, communities of color, and voucher holders, who are disproportionately affected by errors in tenant screening reports. The ACLU has documented that households of color are evicted twice as much as white renters¹. Since these communities are more likely to be impacted by the inaccurate or misleading screening data, improving transparency and accountability in tenant screening practices is crucial towards reducing housing instability and discriminatory outcomes.

DHCD Position

The Department of Housing and Community Development respectfully requests a **favorable** report on HB 313.

¹ <https://www.aclu.org/news/racial-justice/clearing-the-record-how-eviction-sealing-laws-can-advance-housing-access-for-women-of-color>

