



**HB1475 Consumer Protection - Dynamic Pricing Disclosure and Prohibition on Rent-Setting  
Position: Favorable**

March 3, 2026

The Honorable Kris Valderrama, Chair  
Economic Matters Committee  
Room 230, House Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401  
cc: Members, House Economic Matters

Chair Valderrama and Members of the Committee:

Economic Action Maryland Fund writes in strong support of HB1475.

Each year, our Securing Older Adult Resources (SOAR), Tenant Advocacy, and Fair Housing programs serve nearly 2000 older adults and renters who struggle to make ends meet.

The high cost of groceries came up as a point of stress for them again and again. In a recent survey we conducted of more than 500 Marylanders, 73% said that skyrocketing food prices had the greatest impact on their economic security.

Maryland families work hard to put food on the table. But this is becoming harder and harder to do. While there are many factors that contribute to the soaring cost of groceries that are outside of our control, technology is something that we can manage to ensure it does not contribute to rising prices.

Technology can be used to increase price transparency and competition but instead grocery store chains are collecting reams of personal data in order to charge people different prices for the same bag of groceries. Grocery stores are doing this through the use of dynamic pricing and surveillance pricing. Grocery stores are moving from traditional labels to electronic labels which can change prices at the flip of a switch-and that's part of the issue.

Dynamic pricing is the practice of changing prices in real-time based on competition, demand, and inventory to maximize profits. Examples of dynamic pricing include rideshares increasing prices (surge pricing) during a sudden thunderstorm, or increasing the price of ice cream on a hot day, or the price of turkey in the days leading up to Thanksgiving.

*Economic Action (formerly the Maryland Consumer Rights Coalition) champions economic rights and housing justice through advocacy, research, consumer education, and direct service. Our 12,500 supporters include consumer advocates, practitioners, and low-income and working families throughout Maryland.*

2209 Maryland Ave · Baltimore, MD 21218 | [www.econaction.org](http://www.econaction.org)  
Marceline White · [Marceline@EconAction.org](mailto:Marceline@EconAction.org) | Jennifer Bevan-Dangel · [Jennifer@EconAction.org](mailto:Jennifer@EconAction.org)



Dynamic pricing distorts the marketplace and creates an unfair marketplace where retailers exert enormous power to squeeze more profits from financially fragile households. Dynamic pricing eliminates the idea of a public price—that is, a price that remains stable. Consumers, who are constantly told to shop around for the best deal, cannot do so if prices are constantly changing and consumers are not privy to why the price changed.

Surveillance pricing is when grocery store chains collect reams of personal data on customers in order to charge people different prices for the same bag of groceries. Why should one customer be charged more for a loaf of bread than another based on personal data? This practice distorts the market, may be based on error-filled data, and skews the market by using these ‘black box’ models to set prices.

HB1475 requires merchants that use surveillance pricing to disclose that the price was set using an individual’s personal data in a clear and conspicuous manner.

HB1475 also addresses the issue of property management companies fixing prices using software by prohibiting this practice. A free and fair marketplace relies on competition where firms and producers compete for consumers based on price and quality. If the market is functioning, consumers decide to make purchases based on their preferences, price elasticity, and quality. When companies collude and fix prices, consumers lose out.

Last year, opponents noted that it would be prudent to wait until lawsuits filed against [Real Page](#) were decided. [RealPage](#) was sued for colluding to raise rental prices by deploying technology that would recommend rental prices to property managers using competitors data. In November 2025, the Department of Justice and Real Page reached a [settlement](#) that prohibits Real Page from using or training AI using certain non-public data as well as guardrails around its revenue management product.

In the Baltimore-Columbia-Towson area, 14% of multi-family units are managed by property companies named in the price-fixing lawsuits. RealPages algorithms set prices for more than 100,000 apartments across Maryland.

In 2023 [53.3%](#) of Maryland tenants were cost-burdened, meaning they spent more than 30% of their income on rent. The real costs of housing, insurance, utilities, and food prices have increased 22% since 2020 for working families in Maryland. Families are struggling paycheck to paycheck while property management companies across Maryland use private data to fix prices and increase profits at the expense of cash-strapped tenants.

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HB1475 expands on the settlement by extending the prohibitions in the settlement to any property management company in Maryland. It states simply that price-fixing is illegal, as it has been since the Sherman Act of 1890, and that it remains wrong whether conducted in a backroom with a handshake or by joint use of shared data and technology.

HB1475 promotes a free and fair competitive marketplace, protects personal private data, and protects tenants by prohibiting landlords from using algorithms to set rental prices.

For all these reasons, we support HB1475 and urge a favorable report.

Best,

Marceline White  
Executive Director

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