



**SB335: Human Relations - Discrimination in Housing -
Income-Based Housing Subsidies
Position: Favorable with Amendment**

April 2, 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 urges a favorable report on SB335, which would address the misapplication of credit and income-based screening for applicants with income-based housing subsidies. We do request one clarifying amendment on the bill as it passed the Senate, to ensure the bill's income verification provisions related to utilities are clear, workable, and aligned with existing housing market practices.

While utility affordability is a legitimate consideration, the current bill language does not specify how utility affordability should be assessed for tenants receiving income-based housing subsidies. **We support the following clarifying amendment:**

“Notwithstanding any other provision of this section, landlords shall not evaluate whether a tenant has sufficient income to pay utilities if the tenant has an income-based housing subsidy and the entity issuing the income-based housing subsidy includes an allowance for anticipated utility costs in calculating the tenant’s portion of the rent and utilities.”

Absent clarification, utility verification could be applied through discretionary or nonstandard methodologies, potentially resulting in inconsistent application across properties and jurisdictions. Without guardrails, utility-related income verification could function as a de facto screening criterion that is more restrictive than prevailing market practices and inconsistent with the structure of income-based subsidies.

When the legislature passed the HOME Act, the intent was to prohibit source of income discrimination. SB335 closes loopholes that allow landlords to continue to indirectly discriminate based on income, and we urge a favorable report with the amendment above.

Sincerely,
Jennifer Bevan-Dangel, Deputy Director

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.

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