



MARYLAND  
CATHOLIC  
CONFERENCE

February 5th 2026

HB313

**Landlord and Tenant - Residential Housing - Rental Applications and Tenant Screening  
Economic Matters Committee  
Position: Favorable**

The Maryland Catholic Conference offers this testimony in support of **House Bill 313**. **The Maryland** Catholic Conference is the public policy representative of the three (arch)dioceses serving Maryland, which together encompass over one million Marylanders. Statewide, their parishes, schools, hospitals and numerous charities combine to form our state's second largest social service provider network, behind only our state government.

**House Bill 313** protects prospective tenants by prohibiting landlords from collecting an application fee unless the rental unit is currently available or will be available within 30 days. It also requires written disclosures before accepting any application or screening fee. Additionally, landlords must provide written notice before taking adverse action against a prospective tenant. The bill restricts the use of certain records to prevent unfair discrimination during the screening process.

Application fees and screening processes can pose significant financial burdens, particularly for individuals with limited income or those navigating housing instability. This legislation promotes fairness by ensuring renters are not paying unnecessary fees for unavailable units and by requiring greater transparency throughout the application process. It also helps ensure that families are judged fairly, without outdated or irrelevant information being used against them. Supporting this bill promotes equitable housing practices and reduces barriers that disproportionately affect vulnerable populations.

Stable housing is essential to human dignity and family life. Catholic social teaching urges us to protect those who are vulnerable and prevent unjust systems from deepening inequality. By promoting transparency, fairness, and accountability, this bill reflects our moral obligation to stand with those seeking safe, affordable housing. It supports the common good by creating a more just and compassionate rental market—one where all families have a fair chance to secure a home.

For these reasons, the Maryland Catholic Conference urges a favorable report on **House Bill 313**.