



BILL: SB 36

POSITION: FAV - Favorable

COMMITTEE: Education, Energy, and the Environment

DATE: February 13, 2026

SUBMITTED BY: Maryland Department of Disabilities
217 East Redwood Street, Suite 1300, Baltimore, MD 21202

Dear Chair Feldman,

The Maryland Department of Disabilities (MDOD) is pleased to submit this letter of support for **SB 36, Land Use - Zoning - Limitations (Starter and Silver Homes Act of 2026)**. This vital legislation is designed to address housing affordability and supply in Maryland by introducing limitations on local zoning requirements. The bill's purpose is to prohibit local jurisdictions from adopting or enforcing certain restrictive zoning provisions related to single-family homes and to facilitate the creation of more diverse housing types.

The current system of local zoning regulations often creates unnecessary barriers to the construction of more affordable single-family homes. SB 36 directly addresses this issue through several provisions intended to curb zoning practices that promote large lots and large single-family homes that may be priced beyond what many Marylanders can afford.

MDOD would like to highlight language SB 36 proposes to add as § 4-104(e)(3)(v) in the Land Use Article, which would prohibit a legislative body from adopting or enforcing requirements related to the "design, architectural, or aesthetic elements of a single-family home." We believe this provision may help ensure that local jurisdictions are not inadvertently enforcing aesthetic standards that could pose barriers to developing or remediating housing with accessibility or visitability features. We believe promoting flexibility in the design of Maryland's housing stock could increase the potential for affordable housing that truly can be accessed by all Marylanders.

For people with disabilities, the dream of homeownership is often deferred or never realized because of the double barrier created by both a lack of affordable and accessible housing. It is estimated that less than 5% of the housing supply is accessible for individuals with moderate mobility difficulties. This scarcity forces individuals into costly institutional settings or substandard housing. In addition, the trajectory of disability is inextricably linked to the aging process. In Maryland, approximately 29% of adults age 65 and older report functional disabilities, with ambulatory difficulties being most prevalent. The vast majority of that group also acquired their disabilities later in life. The current housing market fails to accommodate this natural life transition. The development of "Silver Homes" enabled through this legislation is a

Carol A. Beatty, Secretary
Anne Blackfield, Deputy Secretary

Wes Moore, Governor
Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor



Maryland

DEPARTMENT OF DISABILITIES

key first step to increasing the amount of affordable housing stock that also allows people to age in place.

For these reasons, MDOD requests a **favorable report on SB 36**. Thank you for your leadership on this critical issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Carol A. Beatty". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Carol A. Beatty
Secretary, Department of Disabilities