

HB 168: Housing and Community Development - Affordable Housing - Educator Workforce Housing and Municipal Corporation: Please vote to **OPPOSE** this bill.

Dear Education, Energy & the Environment Committee:

I am writing as a concerned resident of Maryland to strongly **oppose HB 168**.

While I support teachers and understand the challenges of housing affordability in Maryland, this bill is the wrong approach. It designates "educator workforce housing" — affordable units reserved specifically for teachers and local school system employees — as an eligible use for various state housing loans and other financial advantages from the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD). **It also treats school employees as a preferred "specified group" for the federal Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) program and expands eligibility to include county boards of education and municipal corporations.**

This legislation prioritizes one occupational group over others through government subsidies and set-asides. Housing assistance should remain broadly targeted at low- and moderate-income families based on actual need and income, not reserved for specific professions. Teachers are important, but so are nurses, police officers, firefighters, service workers, and countless other Marylanders struggling with high housing costs. Singling out one group creates unfair preferences and risks turning limited public resources into targeted entitlements.

Furthermore:

- Diverting DHCD funds, tax credits, and other assistance toward occupation-specific projects **reduces the overall supply** of general affordable housing.
- Allowing development on school-owned land or buildings for this purpose **raises questions about proper use of education-related assets and potential long-term costs to taxpayers.**
- Government picking winners among occupations **sets a dangerous precedent and distorts the private housing market** rather than addressing root causes like excessive regulations, zoning restrictions, and high construction costs.
- There is no definition of "educator workforce". Does this include only student-facing positions in the classroom? Does this "educator workforce" leave out other essential positions to a school system, such as janitorial staff that keep our schools safe and clean or food service workers that help to feed our children?
- This bill involves county boards of education, where board members may have no specific skills or education related to housing, being included in

decision-making for housing, which has nothing to do with education. The language “...IF THE PROJECT IS AN EDUCATOR WORKFORCE HOUSING DEVELOPMENT PROJECT.: (l) **APPROVAL BY A COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION** OR AN AUTHORIZED DESIGNEE OF A LOCAL SCHOOL SYSTEM THAT BENEFITS FROM A PROJECT **IS NOT REQUIRED**...” indicates that the county board of education is not required to participate in the approval of the project. Then, in the next sentence of the bill, the language “...THE DEPARTMENT MAY NOT APPROVE A PROPOSAL SUBMITTED UNDER THIS SECTION WITHOUT NOTIFYING THE COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION OR AUTHORIZED DESIGNEE OF AT LEAST ONE LOCAL SCHOOL SYSTEM THAT BENEFITS FROM THE PROJECT...” Thus, the bill language itself is confusing as to whether county boards of education should be included in this housing project and process or not.

Maryland should focus on broad-based solutions that increase housing supply for **all residents instead of layering new targeted subsidies that benefit narrow groups at the expense of everyone else. Otherwise, this practice could be seen as unfair discrimination toward preferred housing applicants.**

I respectfully urge you to **oppose HB 168** and any similar measures that favor specific professions with taxpayer-backed housing preferences.

Thank you for your time and thoughtful consideration of my concerns regarding this legislation.

Respectfully,

Trudy Tibbals