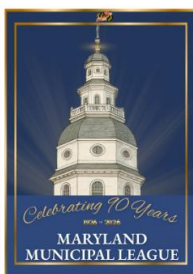


HB 168 CF - FAV - MML.pdf

Uploaded by: Angelica Bailey Thupari

Position: FAV



TESTIMONY

COMMITTEE: Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment

DATE: March 31, 2026

POSITION: Favorable

BILL: HB 168

The Maryland Municipal League (MML) supports House Bill 168, which equips municipalities with new authority, new resources, and a clear role in addressing educator workforce housing, while preserving local approval and fiscal choice.

HB 168 makes existing state housing programs more practical and usable at the local level. By allowing Housing Innovation Pilot Program projects to qualify by setting aside a portion of units for educator workforce housing, rather than relying solely on income thresholds, the bill introduces flexibility that better reflects real-world workforce housing needs. Municipal projects may also leverage state and federal tax credits, including the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit, to support housing for teachers and school staff.

HB 168 also explicitly recognizes municipalities as eligible applicants and project leads, rather than treating them as passive partners. Local governments are given clearer authority to propose projects, access state housing programs, and coordinate directly with the Department of Housing and Community Development, ensuring solutions are shaped by local priorities, planning processes, and capacity.

Finally, the bill creates no fiscal impact for municipalities that choose not to participate. Participation is voluntary, and municipalities that opt in gain access to new state resources, potential federal funding, and flexible financing tools, with manageable administrative obligations. As a result, the bill presents a favorable fiscal value proposition for local governments.

By empowering municipalities while preserving local control and fiscal discretion, HB 168 offers a balanced and collaborative approach to addressing educator workforce housing. For these reasons, the League respectfully requests a favorable report on House Bill 168.

For more information relating to this piece of testimony, please contact:

Angelica Bailey Thupari: Director, Advocacy and Public Policy, angelicab@mdmunicipal.org

Municipalities are home to 25% of Maryland's population while occupying less than 5% of the State's land area.

HB0168 - Senate_FAV_City of Rockville_Housing & Co

Uploaded by: Christine Krone

Position: FAV



Testimony of the Mayor and Council of Rockville
HB 168 – Housing and Community Development – Affordable Housing – Educator
Workforce Housing and Municipal Corporations
SUPPORT

The Mayor and Council of Rockville are thankful to Chair Feldman and members of the Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee for the opportunity to provide support for HB 168. We thank Delegate Vogel for sponsoring this important legislation that aligns with Rockville’s goal to increase workforce housing. We have been working together to discuss the specific needs of housing for teachers and school system employees to expand affordable and accessible options.

The Mayor and Council of Rockville unanimously support HB 168. This bill strengthens Maryland’s ability to produce and finance affordable housing designated for teachers and other local school system employees by making educator workforce housing an eligible use of many Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) financing tools and by expanding eligibility for the Housing Innovation Fund and Housing Innovation Pilot Program to include municipal corporations and county boards of education. This bill also adds educator workforce housing as an allowable project type under the Neighborhood and Community Assistance Program.

Rockville schools, like schools across the country, are competing for staff and to choose the honorable profession of educating our children. There are nearly 1,000 teacher vacancies in Maryland. When educators can’t live near the communities they serve, districts face higher turnover and vacancy rates, longer commutes that reduce retention, and difficulty recruiting early-career teachers. The Stanford Center for Education Policy Analysis found that high teacher turnover disrupts student learning, leading to lower academic achievement in math and English Language Arts, particularly in high-poverty schools. Students experience decreased continuity of instruction, increased behavioral issues and disciplinary actions, reduced emotional stability, and difficulty building necessary, consistent relationships with educators. House Bill 168 addresses this by aligning housing finance tools with workforce reality and opening a practical path to develop housing through public land, partnerships, and innovative finance. This bill would enable us to collaborate on efforts to support teacher housing in Rockville, the County seat, and a central, transit-oriented location.

HB168 unlocks public sites and partnerships by clarifying that educator workforce housing can be developed on land, sites, or buildings acquired by county boards of education and supported through DHCD financial assistance. By broadening who can use state innovation tools, HB 168 expands opportunities to help close financing gaps and move projects from concept to construction. And, importantly, the bill creates additional pathways beyond traditional Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC)—only production, by allowing projects to qualify for the Housing Innovation Pilot Program if any portion of units are set aside for educator workforce housing.

In conclusion, HB 168 is a pragmatic workforce housing bill: it makes educator housing explicitly eligible across state tools, expands eligible public partners, and improves project feasibility. For these reasons, we respectfully request a **FAVORABLE** report. Thank you.

HB 168_Horizon Foundation_FAV - Senate.pdf

Uploaded by: Glenn Schneider

Position: FAV



BOARD OF TRUSTEES

March 31, 2026

COMMITTEE: Senate Education, Energy and the Environment Committee

BILL: HB 168 – Housing and Community Development – Affordable Housing – Educator Workforce Housing and Municipal Corporations

POSITION: Support

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David Wolf

The Horizon Foundation is the largest independent health philanthropy in Maryland. We are committed to a Howard County free from systemic inequities, where all people can live abundant and healthy lives. The Foundation is pleased to **support HB 168 – Housing and Community Development – Affordable Housing – Educator Workforce Housing and Municipal Corporations**. This bill would allow educator workforce housing projects to qualify for financial assistance provided by the Department of Housing and Community Development and make teachers and other school employees eligible for the federal Low-Income Housing Tax Credit Program.

During the Horizon Foundation’s most recent strategic planning process that involved extensive community engagement, residents cited obtaining safe, affordable and high-quality housing as one of the biggest barriers to their ability to live a healthy and abundant life. For over a year, we have been working with local and statewide housing advocates and service providers to examine and develop solutions to this problem and to build a movement for housing justice in Howard County and in Maryland. Where we live impacts our quality of life and how healthy we are – and we all want to live in vibrant neighborhoods full of opportunity. But for many Howard County residents, our community is becoming an increasingly unaffordable place to live – and our housing system is a major reason why.

According to a recent report from the Comptroller’s office, between 2019 and 2022, housing inventory dropped between 40% and 75% in every county in Maryland. During that same time period, median home prices increased by 26% in Howard County.ⁱ The median sales prices of a home in Howard County in April 2025 was \$630,000 – much higher than the regional median sales price of \$435,000. The middle market – homes in the \$300,000 to \$500,000 range – has essentially vanished in Howard County, pricing out young adults and working families from buying a home.ⁱⁱ That middle price range is still far too expensive for many families and working people. Renting does not provide much cost relief either – in fact, Howard County renters pay among the highest rents in the state. The typical gross rent, including the cost of utilities, is over \$2,100 per month.ⁱⁱⁱ

We need to have housing policies that support the working people of Howard County, including our teachers and school employees who are vital members of our community. People should be able to live where they work. Having a quality, stable place to live should be a pathway to economic stability, growth and intergenerational wealth.

We want Howard County and the state of Maryland to be a place where quality, stable homes that people can afford are widely available. Investing in a housing system that works for everyone will improve our state's wellbeing and prosperity. For these reasons, the Foundation **SUPPORTS HB 168** and urges a **FAVORABLE** report. Thank you for your consideration.

ⁱ <https://www.marylandcomptroller.gov/content/dam/mdcomp/md/reports/comptroller/SOTE.pdf>

ⁱⁱ <https://www.thebanner.com/community/housing/howard-county-real-estate-3LURTCXKVZFI3AJPXOO2Y74I6E/>

ⁱⁱⁱ <https://www.thebanner.com/community/local-news/howard-county-census-home-ownership-XZZZGULB5BBEFIN7N2BWBMEIEA/>

HB 168 FAV MSEA Senate .pdf

Uploaded by: Jocelyn Collins

Position: FAV

**FAVORABLE Testimony in Support of House Bill 168
Housing and Community Development - Affordable Housing - Educator
Workforce Housing and Municipal Corporations**

**Education, Energy, and the Environment
March 31, 2026
1:00 pm**

**Paul Lemle
President, MSEA**

The Maryland State Education Association (MSEA) **strongly supports House Bill 168**, which expands access to affordable housing for educators and school employees across Maryland.

House Bill 168 builds on existing State housing tools by expanding the use of established programs—including the Housing Innovation Fund, Housing Innovation Pilot Program, and Neighborhood and Community Assistance Program—to support the development of educator workforce housing. Importantly, the bill does not require new State spending and can be implemented using existing resources, while opening these programs to local school systems and municipal corporations as eligible partners.

The bill defines educator workforce housing as affordable housing reserved for teachers and other school system employees and explicitly incorporates this housing type into State housing policy. By doing so, it ensures that educator housing is treated as a priority within Maryland's broader efforts to address housing supply and affordability challenges.

House Bill 168 also recognizes educator housing as a legitimate **school purpose**, allowing local school boards to retain and utilize land or facilities for workforce housing rather than declaring them surplus. This provision creates



new opportunities to repurpose existing public assets to address workforce needs in high-cost areas.

In addition, the bill strengthens coordination and flexibility across housing programs:

- It prioritizes projects that include educator workforce housing within the Housing Innovation Fund and Pilot Program
- It expands eligibility so local school boards and municipal corporations can directly participate in housing development efforts
- It allows educator workforce housing projects to move forward while ensuring school systems are notified and engaged in the process

These changes remove structural barriers and enable more innovative, locally driven solutions to housing shortages affecting educators.

MSEA's support is grounded in **MSEA Resolution F.23 – Fair Housing**, which affirms that “fair housing practices should be broadened and strengthened to assure each citizen an equal opportunity to reside in a neighborhood of their choice.” Ensuring educators can afford to live in the communities where they work is essential to that vision.

MSEA represents 76,000 educators and school employees who work in Maryland's public schools and community colleges, teaching and supporting our almost 900,000 K-12 students so they can pursue their dreams. MSEA represents more than 44 local affiliates in every county across the state of Maryland, and our parent affiliate is the 3-million-member National Education Association (NEA). Across the state, rising housing costs are forcing many educators into long commutes or out of the profession entirely. These



challenges directly impact recruitment, retention, and the stability of our school communities.

By leveraging existing housing programs, encouraging partnerships, and unlocking public assets, House Bill 168 provides a practical pathway to increase the supply of affordable housing for educators—without imposing new fiscal burdens on the State.

For these reasons, we respectfully urge the committee to issue a **Favorable Report** on House Bill 168.

MMHA - 2026 - HB168 as amended - FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Matthew Pipkin

Position: FAV



House Bill 168

Committee: Education, Energy, and the Environment

Bill: House Bill 168 - Housing and Community Development - Affordable Housing - Educator Workforce Housing and Municipal Corporations

Date: March 31st, 2026

Position: Favorable

The Maryland Multi-Housing Association (MMHA) is a professional trade association established in 1996, whose members consist of owners and managers of more than 214,000 rental housing homes in over 1015 apartment communities. Our members house over 571,000 residents of the State of Maryland. MMHA also represents over 270 associate member companies who supply goods and services to the multi-housing industry.

As amended, House Bill 168 (“HB 168”) establishes that providing educator workforce housing is an eligible use of certain financial assistance provided by the Department of Housing and Community Development.

MMHA would like to commend the sponsor for bringing forth an innovative idea that seeks to chip away at Maryland’s housing dearth of 96,000 units. MMHA recognizes that many educators across Maryland seek and choose to live in our multi-housing communities and to make it their homes. By freeing up these specified funds, MMHA is hopeful this legislation may result in the creation of unique and dedicated educator workforce multi-housing developments.

For those reasons, MMHA would ask for a favorable report to HB168.

Please contact Matthew Pipkin, Jr. at (443) 995-4342 or mpipkin@mmhaonline.org with any questions.

HB168X_MSEA_Lemle_FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Paul Lemle

Position: FAV

**FAVORABLE Testimony in Support of House Bill 168
Housing and Community Development - Affordable Housing - Educator
Workforce Housing and Municipal Corporations**

**Education, Energy, and the Environment
March 31, 2026
1:00 pm**

**Paul Lemle
President, MSEA**

The Maryland State Education Association (MSEA) **strongly supports House Bill 168**, which expands access to affordable housing for educators and school employees across Maryland.

House Bill 168 builds on existing State housing tools by expanding the use of established programs—including the Housing Innovation Fund, Housing Innovation Pilot Program, and Neighborhood and Community Assistance Program—to support the development of educator workforce housing. Importantly, the bill does not require new State spending and can be implemented using existing resources, while opening these programs to local school systems and municipal corporations as eligible partners.

The bill defines educator workforce housing as affordable housing reserved for teachers and other school system employees and explicitly incorporates this housing type into State housing policy. By doing so, it ensures that educator housing is treated as a priority within Maryland's broader efforts to address housing supply and affordability challenges.

House Bill 168 also recognizes educator housing as a legitimate **school purpose**, allowing local school boards to retain and utilize land or facilities for workforce housing rather than declaring them surplus. This provision creates



new opportunities to repurpose existing public assets to address workforce needs in high-cost areas.

In addition, the bill strengthens coordination and flexibility across housing programs:

- It prioritizes projects that include educator workforce housing within the Housing Innovation Fund and Pilot Program
- It expands eligibility so local school boards and municipal corporations can directly participate in housing development efforts
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These changes remove structural barriers and enable more innovative, locally driven solutions to housing shortages affecting educators.

MSEA's support is grounded in **MSEA Resolution F.23 – Fair Housing**, which affirms that “fair housing practices should be broadened and strengthened to assure each citizen an equal opportunity to reside in a neighborhood of their choice.” Ensuring educators can afford to live in the communities where they work is essential to that vision.

MSEA represents 76,000 educators and school employees who work in Maryland's public schools and community colleges, teaching and supporting our almost 900,000 K-12 students so they can pursue their dreams. MSEA represents more than 44 local affiliates in every county across the state of Maryland, and our parent affiliate is the 3-million-member National Education Association (NEA). Across the state, rising housing costs are forcing many educators into long commutes or out of the profession entirely. These



challenges directly impact recruitment, retention, and the stability of our school communities.

By leveraging existing housing programs, encouraging partnerships, and unlocking public assets, House Bill 168 provides a practical pathway to increase the supply of affordable housing for educators—without imposing new fiscal burdens on the State.

For these reasons, we respectfully urge the committee to issue a **Favorable Report** on House Bill 168.

Testimony in support of HB0168 - Affordable Housin

Uploaded by: Richard KAP Kaplowitz

Position: FAV

HB0168_RichardKaplowitz_FAV

02/05/2026

Richard Keith Kaplowitz

Frederick, MD 21703

TESTIMONY ON HB#/0168- POSITION: FAVORABLE

Housing and Community Development - Affordable Housing - Educator Workforce Housing and Municipal Corporations

TO: Chair Valderrama, Vice Chair Charkoudian and members of the Economic Matters Committee

FROM: Richard Keith Kaplowitz

My name is Richard Keith Kaplowitz. I am a resident of District 3, Frederick County. I am submitting this testimony in support of HB#/0168, **Housing and Community Development - Affordable Housing - Educator Workforce Housing and Municipal Corporations**

The National Education Association has reported *Educators Struggle to Find Affordable Housing On their salaries, many teachers simply can't afford to live where they work.*¹

1. Skyrocketing rents and home prices in many school districts are preventing prospective teachers and school staff from taking or keeping jobs.
2. While securing higher educator pay remains paramount, educators and their unions are stepping up their advocacy for affordable housing.
3. Facing acute staff shortages and high housing costs, a growing number of communities are exploring workforce housing as a recruitment and retention strategy.

Maryland can and should acknowledge these problems and pass this bill to address them. The bill will establish that providing educator workforce housing is an eligible use of certain financial assistance provided by the Department of Housing and Community Development; establishing that teachers and other employees of a local school system shall be considered a specified group for purposes of the federal Low-Income Housing Tax Credit program; and altering the eligible recipients of certain financial assistance.

We can, as reported by Randy Weingarten, President of the American Federation of Teachers has noted, fix the *Lack of Affordable Housing ... Exacerbating the Shortage of Public Educators Across the Country, Particularly in the Suburbs*²

I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on HB#/0168.

¹ <https://www.nea.org/nea-today/all-news-articles/teachers-struggle-find-affordable-housing>

² <https://upforgrowth.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/Weingarten-Article.pdf>

SEIU Local 500 Testimony in Support of HB 168 - Se

Uploaded by: Terrence Cavanagh

Position: FAV



Testimony - HB 168, Housing and Community Development - Affordable Housing -
Educator Workforce Housing and Municipal Corporations
Favorable
Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
March 31, 2026
Terrence Cavanagh on Behalf of SEIU Local 500

Honorable Chairman Feldman and Members of the Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee:

On behalf of the more than 20,000 education workers represented by SEIU Local 500—including educational support professionals in Montgomery County Public Schools—we stand in strong support of House Bill 168.

Our members are the backbone of Maryland’s public education system. Yet far too many of them—alongside teachers—are being priced out of the very communities they serve. The rising cost of housing is not just a personal burden; it is a workforce crisis that directly impacts student success, school stability, and the ability of districts to recruit and retain qualified staff.

HB 168 is a smart, targeted solution to this growing crisis.

This legislation recognizes educator workforce housing as an eligible use of state housing resources and explicitly includes school employees as a priority population for affordable housing development. By doing so, the bill takes an important step toward aligning Maryland’s housing policy with the real needs of its public workforce.

For SEIU Local 500 members, this matters deeply:

- Many of our members earn modest wages despite performing essential roles in schools. They are increasingly forced into long commutes, unstable housing situations, or leaving the profession entirely.

- Chronic vacancies among support staff—especially bus drivers, paras, and building services workers—are exacerbated by the lack of affordable housing near schools.
- Students suffer when experienced, trusted adults are pushed out of their communities.

HB 168 helps address these challenges in several important ways:

- It allows state housing programs and funding streams to support educator workforce housing, including developments that serve school employees directly.
- It enables local school systems and boards of education to partner in housing development, including the use of surplus land for affordable housing.
- It ensures that educators and school employees are recognized as a priority group in affordable housing initiatives, including eligibility under federal housing programs like the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit.

Importantly, this bill does not create a one-size-fits-all mandate. Instead, it provides tools and flexibility for local jurisdictions to innovate—leveraging partnerships, public land, and existing funding programs to meet workforce housing needs.

For our members, this is about more than housing—it's about dignity, stability, and the ability to continue serving students without sacrificing their own well-being.

When school employees can afford to live in the communities where they work:

- Schools are more stable
- Students benefit from stronger relationships
- Local economies are strengthened

SEIU Local 500 urges a favorable report on HB 168 and thanks the Committee for its commitment to addressing both the housing crisis and the needs of Maryland's public education workforce.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

HB 168_ Housing and Community Development - Affor

Uploaded by: Trudy Tibbals

Position: UNF

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