



## **House Bill 1456 - Consumer Protection - Residential Property Advertisement - Ownership Verification**

### **Position: Support as Amended**

Maryland REALTORS® supports the General Assembly's efforts to combat real estate fraud and protect consumers from deceptive schemes in which properties are advertised without the owner's knowledge or consent. These scams are increasingly common and can cause significant financial harm to potential home buyers and renters alike.

As originally drafted, HB 1456 raised concerns about unintended consequences for legitimate real estate activity. It did not clearly limit its scope to Maryland properties, potentially subjecting companies to verification requirements for listings nationwide. It also failed to reflect how listings are distributed today, where a single entry in a multiple listing service (MLS) can be shared across many platforms. Requiring each platform to independently verify ownership of the same advertisement would be duplicative, burdensome, and could reduce listing availability.

House amendments addressed these issues by limiting the bill's scope to properties located in Maryland and distinguishing between listings from licensed real estate professionals and unverified sources. Maryland regulations already require written owner authorization before real estate licensees may advertise a property, as well as review and approval from the licensee's broker.

The amended bill also removes the need to reverify ownership when approved listings are shared with third-party sites via the MLS, avoiding tens or hundreds of thousands of unnecessary verifications. This approach preserves the bill's consumer protection goals without disrupting the real estate market.

Maryland REALTORS® greatly appreciates the sponsor's collaboration on these provisions and respectfully urges a favorable report on HB 1456 as amended.

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