



# PROGRESSIVE MARYLAND

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**Bill Title:** SB 335 - Human Relations – Discrimination in Housing – Income Based Housing Subsidies

**To:** Judicial Proceedings Committee

**From:** Erica Puentes, Legislative Coordinator on behalf of Progressive Maryland

**Date:** February 3, 2026

Dear Chair Smith and Members of the Committee,

**Progressive Maryland strongly supports SB 335 - Human Relations – Discrimination in Housing – Income Based Housing Subsidies.** Progressive Maryland is a member based organization led by and focused on working class, Black, and brown communities. Our grassroots advocacy focuses include racial justice and economic justice with the aim of building a more just and equitable Maryland. We have over 125,000 members and supporters across the state, with significant bases in Baltimore City, Prince George's, Montgomery, Frederick, Harford counties, and the Eastern Shore.

Families relying on Housing Choice Vouchers and other income-based subsidies frequently encounter credit and income screening practices that effectively shut them out of rental housing even though their rent is largely covered by the housing subsidy and any amount they pay is capped for affordability. As the bill recognizes, this undermines both the purpose of housing assistance and the intent of the HOME Act.

Public Housing Authorities already verify income, determine affordability, and adjust assistance when income changes. These safeguards ensure rent stability, making additional credit or income screening unnecessary and duplicative. Rent relevant criteria like rental history, landlord references, and verified eviction outcomes offer a more accurate and fair assessment of tenant risk.

Importantly, credit scores were not designed for rental decisions and rarely include rental payment history. Research and federal guidance from HUD indicate that relying on credit scores for assisted tenants may produce unjustified discriminatory impacts, particularly on Black renters, women led households, and low-income families.

By clarifying appropriate screening practices, SB 335 preserves landlords' ability to assess tenant suitability while ensuring that criteria are relevant, fair, and aligned with the structure of housing assistance. This legislation helps reduce avoidable denials, shortens housing searches, and strengthens stability for families across the state.

For these reasons, **Progressive Maryland respectfully urges a Favorable report on SB 335.**