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DATE: March 5, 2026
BILL NO.: Senate Bill 729
TITLE: Real Property - Access to Counsel in Evictions Program and Mobile Home Parks
COMMITTEE: Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

Letter of Support

Description of Bill:

Senate Bill 729 would expand access to legal representation under the Access to Counsel in Evictions (ACE) Program to individuals who live in a mobile home park. The ACE program is administered by the Maryland Legal Services Corporation, and it provides free lawyers to renters living in Maryland who have a household income that is at or below 50% of Maryland's median income.

Background and Analysis:

The ACE program was established in 2021 by the Maryland General Assembly, and services began to be administered in July of 2022. Under the program, the Maryland Legal Services Corporation was to provide access to legal representation individuals who either occupy a residential property under a claim of right other than owner (tenants) or are members of a household with an income that is not greater than 50% of the median income of the State (adjusted for household size). However, as written in the 2021 legislation, the program would not have been able to assist residents of mobile homes. As a result, the program would inherently best serve residents in suburban and urban areas.

Residents of mobile home parks experience many of the same economic disadvantages as traditional renters like the threat of eviction from failure to pay rent, and breach of lease, or even subsidy terminations as many residents of mobile homes make applicable use of a section 8 voucher on a mobile home that meets HUD quality standards. In expanding the program's "covered individuals" to include residents of a mobile home park, SB 729 is protecting another vulnerable population, thereby strengthening the original legislation, and protecting Maryland residents who rent or live in a mobile home park.

DHCD Position

The Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development respectfully requests a **favorable** report on Senate Bill 729.

