



# State of Maryland Commission on Civil Rights

*Respect...Integrity...Effective Communication*

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March 5, 2026

**Senate Bill 694 – Human Relations – Violations of  
County Discrimination Laws – Complaints  
Position: Support**

Dear Chairperson Smith, Vice Chairperson Waldstreicher, and Members of the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee:

The Maryland Commission on Civil Rights (“MCCR”; “The Commission”) is the State agency responsible for enforcing Maryland’s laws prohibiting discrimination in employment, housing, public accommodations, state contracts, commercial leasing, and health services based on race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, marital status, familial status, sexual orientation, gender identity, genetic information, physical and mental disability, source of income, and military status.

Senate Bill 694 makes a technical change to current law clarifying that filing a discrimination complaint with MCCR satisfies the exhaustion of remedies requirement necessary for an individual in Baltimore, Howard, Montgomery, and Prince George’s counties to initiate private action in Circuit Court alleging a violation of county anti-discrimination law. This technical change is consistent with an individual’s current right to assert a violation of Maryland or federal anti-discrimination law in either State or federal court.

This bill does not alter or expand an individual’s existing private right of action. Rather, SB694 simply enables an individual to claim a violation of county anti-discrimination law in court if that individual initially opted to submit an administrative complaint to MCCR as opposed to, for example, the Howard County Office of Human Rights & Equity.

For these reasons, the Maryland Commission on Civil Rights urges a favorable vote on SB694. Thank you for your time and consideration of the information contained in this letter. MCCR looks forward to the continued opportunity to work with you to promote and improve civil rights in Maryland.

***“Our vision is to have a State that is free from any trace of unlawful discrimination.”***

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