



House Bill 130 – Criminal Law - Deed Fraud - Prohibition, Deed Fraud Prevention Grant Fund, and Task Force to Study Deed Fraud

Position: Support with Amendments

Maryland REALTORS® supports efforts to combat fraudulent real estate activities, such as those outlined in HB 130.

Seller and renter impersonation, squatting, and other real estate related frauds have increased in recent years, both in Maryland and across the country. Technology has aided the process through forged deeds and leases, remote notarization, and electronic funds transfers. We thank the sponsor for bringing forward legislation to begin to address these actions.

In addition, the Deed Fraud Prevention Grant Fund can provide resources to those who have been victimized by real estate fraud, who often need to retain attorneys and seek relief from the courts to undo the damage caused to them.

To make HB 130 more effective, we suggest the following amendments:

- Amend 8-906 (A)(5) to include references to counterfeiting leases in addition to deeds, as follows: “COUNTERFEIT A DEED OR LEASE OR CAUSE A DEED OR LEASE TO BE COUNTERFEITED;”
- Amend Section 2(b)(6) to include a Maryland real estate licensee on the proposed Task Force to Study Deed Fraud.

With the above amendments, Maryland REALTORS® asks for your favorable report.

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