

Talking Points: HB 231/SB 530—Housing Opportunities Made Equal (HOME) Act

BILL SYNOPSIS

HB 231 Lead sponsor: Del. Brooke Lierman • House Environment and Transportation Committee

SB 530 Lead sponsor: Sen. Will Smith • Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

This bill prohibits landlords and other property owners from discriminating against someone seeking housing based on their source of income. Local versions passed in 2019, including in Baltimore City and Baltimore County, and it's time to make it state-wide.

BILL BACKGROUND

- We've been fighting for this bill since 2002—but things are changing! This year, the Senate has already passed the bill, and it's moving onto the House.

BILL TALKING POINTS

- Tens of thousands of Maryland families use housing choice vouchers and tens of thousands more are on waiting lists. When they are excluded from housing, they end up on the street, in shelters or doubled up.
- Ending housing discrimination increases the availability of housing that's affordable to people with extremely low incomes—like the majority of our clients.
- Fair housing practices like these help deconcentrate poverty, create more mixed-income communities and greater affordable housing for all.

BILL PUSHBACK...

- Landlords shouldn't be forced to accept government vouchers
 - **Possible response:** *This bill still leaves decision-making in the hands of the landlord. It doesn't stop landlords from verifying source and amount of income, creditworthiness, evaluating income stability or tenant history and suitability. And on the other side of the coin, people using vouchers should not be rejected from housing simply because of their source of income.*
- The HOME Act would slow down or prevent housing and economic development.
 - **Possible response:** *Howard, Montgomery, Frederick, Prince George, Baltimore, Anne Arundel Counties and the cities of Baltimore, Frederick and Annapolis already have laws prohibiting source of income discrimination. None of these areas—or the 16 other states and District of Columbia with similar laws—show impact on economic development.*