



**Bill No:** HB 816—Real Property—Residential Leases—Voter Registration

**Committee:** Environment and Transportation

**Date:** 2/25/2020

**Position:** Support with Amendments

The Apartment and Office Building Association of Metropolitan Washington (AOBA) supports HB 816 as amended. AOBA's members own or manage more than 23 million square feet of commercial office space and 133,000 apartment rental units in Montgomery and Prince George's counties.

As drafted, House Bill 816 requires that, within 15 days of occupancy, a housing provider must provide a tenant with a state voter registration application for each individual at least 16 years old who is authorized to reside at the residential rental property. Under the proposed legislation, any housing provider that fails to comply would be liable for \$25.00 in damages for each voter registration application that the housing provider failed to provide.

AOBA fully supports efforts to engage residents and increase resident awareness, particularly on community initiatives such as voter registration. AOBA members thank the sponsor of HB 816 for meeting with the Association about its concerns with the legislation as drafted. Further, Del. Lewis has been amenable to allowing AOBA members to disseminate this information in a manner that more closely aligns with their current business practices.

Del. Lewis' proposed amendments would modify the bill so that a housing provider can comply with the law by either (1) including a link to the voter registration page in an online tenant portal/website; or (2) adding the phone number to request a voter registration card to new tenant package. With these amendments the bill fits how AOBA members provide residents information. Also, providing a warning for the first complaint of non-compliance, before assessing a \$10 fine for any subsequent complaint, demonstrates the sponsor's willingness to work with housing providers.

For further information contact Erin Bradley, AOBA Vice President of Government Affairs, at 301-261-1460 or [ebradley@aoba-metro.org](mailto:ebradley@aoba-metro.org).