



**Testimony for the House Health and Government Operations  
Committee  
March 6, 2020**

**HB 1561 – Discriminatory Housing Practices - Intent**

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**FAVORABLE**

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The ACLU of Maryland supports HB 1561, which would prevent discriminatory housing practices based on race, color, religion, sex, disability, marital status, familial status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or national origin.

This bill extends current housing anti-discrimination laws to help ensure that individuals and families are not denied housing opportunities by anyone based on characteristics that are irrelevant to whether they are and will continue to be good and reliable tenants and neighbors.

As housing costs rise and wages remain stagnant, it becomes more difficult for Marylanders to find safe and affordable places to live. The current allotment of affordable housing is not sufficient to meet the needs in our state. This bill provides more equitable access to all Marylanders, and protections for those who often face additional barriers to housing, including people with disabilities, single mothers with children, seniors, veterans, people living with friends and family members, and those who pay housing costs through other means.

The safeguards in this bill help ensure that all Marylanders have the same opportunity to live and raise their families in safe and healthy communities.

For the foregoing reasons, we urge a favorable report on HB 1561.