



**TESTIMONY FOR SB0687
STATE AND LOCAL HOUSING PROGRAMS – AFFIRMATIVELY FURTHERING FAIR
HOUSING**

Bill Sponsor: Senator Smith

Committee: Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

Organization Submitting: Maryland Legislative Coalition

Person Submitting: Cecilia Plante, co-chair

Position: FAVORABLE

I am submitting this testimony in favor of SB0687 on behalf of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. The Maryland Legislative Coalition is an association of activists - individuals and grassroots groups in every district in the state. We are unpaid citizen lobbyists and our Coalition supports well over 30,000 members.

This bill gets at the spirit of the idea of fair housing. Our members fully support the idea of housing that supports individuals with disabilities and those who struggle financially. We feel that there needs to be more oversight on the Department of Housing and Community Development to ensure that they are effectively supporting their mandate and affirmatively furthering fair housing in the state.

Knowing how many people they support, what the demographics are, how much segregation is involved and what kind of racial and ethnic concentration is happening in areas of poverty as opposed to areas of opportunity are important pieces of information that will help evaluate the success of the program.

We won't know if the organizations that are tasked with providing fair housing are really doing the job effectively until we have this information. This bill is an important step in ensuring that the laws that we have created to serve some of our most needy citizens are being followed effectively and with their needs in mind.

We support this bill and recommend a **FAVORABLE** report in committee.