

ANTONIO HAYES
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Finance Committee



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THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

**Testimony of Senator Hayes in Support of Senate Bill 678: Real Property - Residential
Contract of Sale - Buyer Privacy**

February 22, 2022

Dear Chairman Smith and Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee,

Senate Bill 678 was heard by this committee last year. As this Assembly seeks to continue to evaluate legislation with heightened scrutiny to ensure equality and inclusion, **SB 678** is an opportunity to correct Maryland's discriminatory history when it comes to real estate transactions.

Many believe Maryland laid the grounds for racial discrimination pertaining to real estate, with the Baltimore City Council's passing of the Residential Segregation bill in 1910. This was the first bill in our country that used government legislation in order to separate races through real estate. Other states then adopted similar redlining measures based on the bill that began in Maryland. We have an opportunity to take a step in the right direction and correct the laws that have negatively impacted our marginalized communities.

SB 678 allows a buyer to mask their identity when entering into a contract of sale for a single-family residential real property that is executed with the services of a real estate broker. During a sale, a client can sign their initials instead of their full name. The purpose of this bill is to protect people from discrimination in real estate transactions. It will also modernize the Fair Housing Laws that are already in place and continue to expand the protections afforded to our citizens.

The removal of a buyer's name in a real estate transaction protects people against discrimination. A person's name can be representative of their culture, race, familial status or other ties to their background. This can lead to bias, either explicit or implicit, in our real estate system.

Housing is an important step to social mobility and all people deserve to be treated fairly during the process of real estate transactions. Housing has a tremendous impact on the quality of

life and wellbeing of our residents. **SB 678** is a step in the right direction for the continued protection that the Fair Housing Act of 1968 sought to preserve.

Thus, I request a favorable report on **SB 678**.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Antonio L. Hayes", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Senator Antonio L. Hayes
40th Legislative District - MD