

CITY OF BALTIMORE

STEPHANIE RAWLINGS-BLAKE, Mayor



DEPARTMENT OF LAW

GEORGE A. NILSON, City Solicitor
101 City Hall
Baltimore, Maryland 21202

June 12, 2014

Honorable President and Members
of the City Council of Baltimore
Room 409, City Hall
100 N. Holliday Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21202

Attn: Karen Randle
Executive Secretary

Re: City Council Bill 14-0317 – Housing – Source of Income Discrimination

Dear President and City Council Members:

The Law Department has reviewed City Council Bill 14-0317 for form and legal sufficiency. The bill requires that housing projects subject to affordable housing requirements make their dwellings available to individuals without distinction based on source of income and prohibits certain predatory representations based on the source of income of housing occupants.

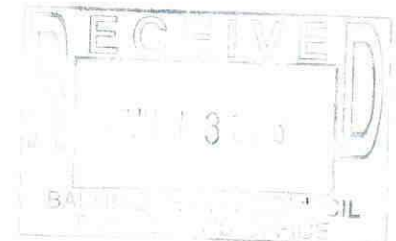
Various federal and state laws prohibit housing discrimination because of race, sex, color, religion, national origin, marital status, familial status, sexual orientation or disability. There is no law prohibiting housing discrimination based on source of income. Each year since 2010, bills addressing this topic have been introduced in both houses of the Maryland General Assembly. To date, none have been adopted by any committee or house.

A person claiming to have been injured by a discriminatory housing practice may file a complaint with the Maryland Commission on Civil Rights or file a civil action in circuit court. If an administrative law judge (ALJ) finds that the respondent has engaged in a discriminatory housing practice, the ALJ may order appropriate relief, including actual damages and injunctive or other relief, and may assess a civil penalty against the respondent. A court may award actual or punitive damages, grant injunctive relief, and allow reasonable attorney's fees and costs.

As there are no legal impediments to the adoption of this bill, the Law Department approves the bill for form and legal sufficiency as drafted.

Very truly yours,

Victor K. Tervala
Chief Solicitor



cc: George Nilson, City Solicitor
Angela C. Gibson, Mayor's Legislative Liaison
Elena DiPietro, Chief Solicitor
Hilary Ruley, Assistant Solicitor
Jennifer Landis, Assistant Solicitor