

Council Bill 22-0195 – Inclusionary Housing for Baltimore City

Testimony in Support with Sponsor Amendments
Committee of the Whole
November 15, 2022



Health Care for the Homeless respectfully urges support with sponsor amendments for Council Bill 22-0195.

At Health Care for the Homeless, our vision is that everyone is healthy and has a safe home in a just and respectful community. To that end, we work to end homelessness through racially equitable health care, housing and advocacy in partnership with those of us who have experienced it.

Health Care for the Homeless is Maryland’s leading provider of integrated health services and supportive housing for individuals and families experiencing homelessness. We work to prevent and end homelessness for vulnerable individuals and families by providing quality, integrated health care and promoting access to affordable housing and sustainable incomes through direct service, advocacy, and community engagement. We deliver integrated medical care, mental health services, state-certified addiction treatment, dental care, social services, and housing support services for over 10,000 Marylanders annually at sites in Baltimore City and Baltimore County.

Inclusionary Housing is an essential tool to building more affordable, integrated neighborhoods in Baltimore City. Inclusionary Housing Bill 22-0195 is a balanced approach that would require every residential project over 20 units that receives a major subsidy or rezoning to set aside 10% of units as affordable, plus an additional 5% for even lower incomes if the project receives more subsidy. Advocates estimate that CB 22-1095 with sponsor amendments would create over 1,000 new affordable units over the next decade. With CB 22-1095, Baltimore has a chance to break with development policies that subsidized segregation and separate-and-unequal development and create a more equitable, integrated future.

Affordable housing is the solution to end homelessness. We provide supportive services to hundreds of individuals and families in permanent supportive housing. And for the first time in our agency’s history, we worked in partnership with Episcopal Housing Corporation to construct our first affordable apartment building, Sojourner Place at Oliver. We expect residents to be able to move in before the end of the year. Located at the cross-streets of Harford and Preston in East Baltimore’s Oliver neighborhood, the building will bring 70 new apartments to this historic community. Half of the apartments at Sojourner Place will be designated for people experiencing homelessness, and the other half will be affordable at 50% of the area median income. Given our core philosophy and critical work to address the affordable housing shortage, we strongly urge the sponsor amendment to include “very low” or “extremely low” income thresholds as part of the legislation. This is an extremely reasonable amendment that

will help ensure affordable housing for the most vulnerable populations this bill seeks to cover. Under the amendment, developers would only be building affordable housing for the lowest income levels if they receive an *additional* subsidy. In other words, developers are not required to have housing for anyone with income below the “low income” threshold unless they get the additional subsidy. This is a highly moderate approach to help address those individuals and families experiencing homelessness.

Baltimore's now expired law was ineffective, producing only 37 affordable housing units in 15 years. Baltimore currently has no inclusionary housing law. It is time to pass an inclusionary housing law that **provides *all* Baltimore residents the opportunity to participate in Baltimore’s redevelopment as the integrated, equitable City that we deserve. We urge a favorable vote with sponsor amendments on CB 22-1095.**