



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF BALTIMORE COUNTY

6600 YORK ROAD SUITE 211
BALTIMORE, MD 21212
lwwbaltimore@comcast.net
www.LWVBaltimorecounty.org
Phone: 410.377.8046

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League of Women Voters of Baltimore County testimony to the Baltimore County Council Concerning the HOME Act Bill No. 49-19.

The League of Women Voters of Baltimore County is proud to be a member of the Baltimore County Voters for Fair Housing Coalition. **We support passage of Bill No. 49-19 without a percent cap amendment.**

The League has worked for many years for equal opportunity in access to housing, employment and education. Our members in the Baltimore County chapter have voted to make the HOME Act a priority issue.

As you know, the HOME Act addresses a difficulty that some county residents face – being turned away from rental housing solely because of the source of their income. This legislation will de-concentrate poverty and will open up housing opportunities *throughout* the county. Those with Housing Choice Vouchers will have a fair chance to have their rental applications considered. It will reduce the time it now takes to find housing and make it easier for working families to move closer to their jobs. For families with school age children the HOME Act would also mean greater choice in school districts. No landlord will be prohibited from screening potential tenants, including rental history and ability to pay rent.

Why do we oppose a percent cap amendment to Bill No. 49-19? Such a cap would unfairly stigmatize Housing Choice Voucher holders and contravene the principle of equality of opportunity for all people, a foundation of fair housing and equal protection laws.

League of Women Voters members live in all areas of the county, and we want our neighborhoods and the county as a whole to thrive. We believe that our county should join the 12 states and 75 jurisdictions (including Anne Arundel, Frederick, Howard and Montgomery Counties) that have added source of income to their fair housing laws.

Submitted by Betsy Sexton, Board of Directors Advocacy Chair