



Bill No. 55-19

Anne Arundel Fair Housing Bill

View the bill here: bit.ly/bill55-19

What would the legislation do?

Explicitly prohibit real estate professionals, landlords, and property owners doing business in Anne Arundel County from discriminating against persons in the sale, rent, or provision of housing.

What classes would be protected?

- Age
- Ancestry
- Citizenship
- Color
- Creed
- Disability
- Familial status
- Gender identity or expression
- Marital status
- National origin
- Occupation
- Race
- Religion
- Sex
- Sexual orientation
- Source of income

Why does Anne Arundel County need this legislation?

Anne Arundel County does not have **any** local fair housing protections. If someone is being discriminated against, they must file a complaint with the state or federal government, which do not provide protection for the following classes:

Age, Ancestry, Citizenship, Creed, Occupation, or Source of Income

This legislation would allow us to add protections for these excluded classes, and allow our Office of Law to pursue enforcement and levy fines against violators, while signaling to current and potential residents and businesses that our county operates in a fair and equitable manner.

What would this legislation NOT do?

- It would NOT: Prohibit a landlord from determining the renter's ability to comply with lease terms or pay the rent by: verifying the renter's source and amount of income; evaluating the stability and security of the renter's income; or evaluating the renter's tenant history, credit, criminal background, and suitability.
- It would NOT: Prevent a landlord from refusing income derived from criminal activity.
- It would NOT: Prevent housing authorities from revoking housing choice vouchers if the tenant violates the terms of the lease or the voucher program.
- It would NOT: Prevent the landlord from using their own lease or from filing a Failure to Pay Rent action in court if any portion of the rent is unpaid.
- It would NOT: Prevent the landlord from requiring renter's insurance for voucher holders, as they would for any other tenant.

What does "source of income" mean?

Any **lawful** source of funds used to rent or purchase housing. It includes money from 1) lawful employment; 2) any government or private assistance, grant, loan, or rental assistance program; and 3) any gift, inheritance, pension, annuity, alimony, or child support.

Who would benefit from the inclusion of source of income in this legislation?

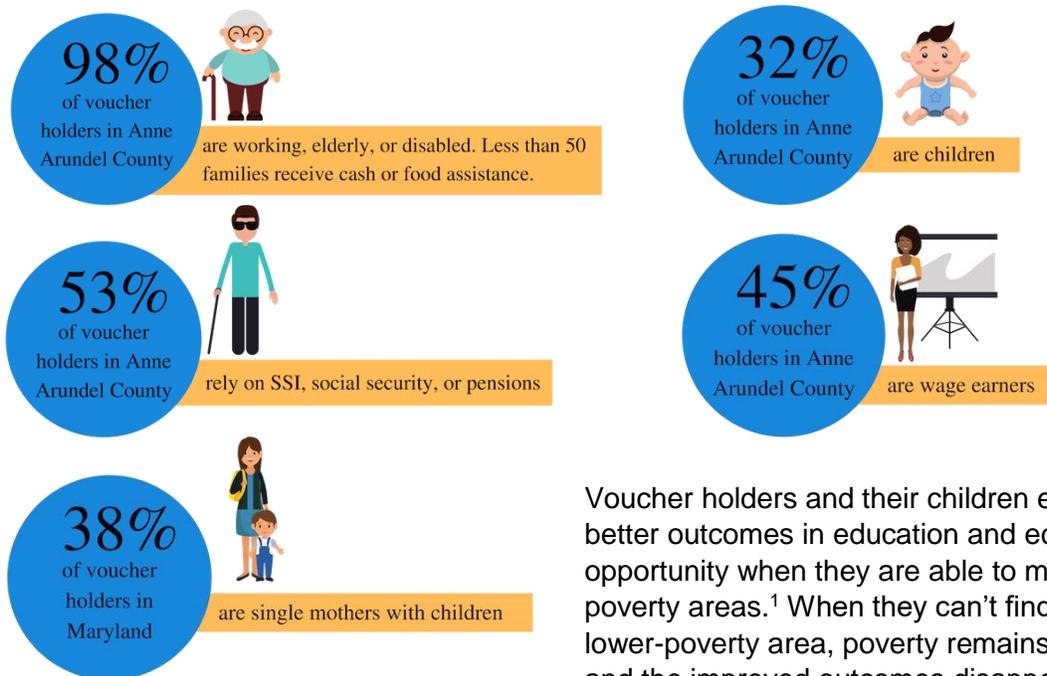
Source of income discrimination disproportionately affects vulnerable populations:

Senior Citizens, People with Disabilities, Single Mothers, Veterans, and Low Wage Workers

Many of these people use housing vouchers because their incomes are not high enough to pay the full rent.

Who uses housing vouchers in our county?

The Housing Commission of Anne Arundel County administers over 1,980 housing vouchers. Voucher holders comprise just 0.8% of county households.



Voucher holders and their children experience better outcomes in education and economic opportunity when they are able to move to lower-poverty areas.¹ When they can't find a unit in a lower-poverty area, poverty remains concentrated and the improved outcomes disappear.

Do source of income anti-discrimination laws exist in other places?

Yes. Howard, Montgomery, and Frederick Counties as well as Baltimore City, Frederick City, and Annapolis all have laws prohibiting source of income discrimination. Across the country, over 12 states, 75 cities and counties, and the District of Columbia have similar laws, some of which have been in place for over 20 years.

These laws work. A recent study showed D.C. landlords refuse vouchers only 15% of the time, despite D.C.'s hot market, while landlords in Ft. Worth, a softer market without protections, refuse vouchers 78% of the time.²

¹ Lance Freeman, Yunjing Li, "Do Source of Income (SOI) Anti-Discrimination Laws Facilitate Access to Better Neighborhoods?", 29 Journal of Housing Studies 1 (2011)

² HUD, "A Pilot Study of Landlord Acceptance of Housing Vouchers" (2018)