**SUPPORT HB6 (Del. Bourne) HB357 (Del. Lopez)**

***Protect low-income families from housing discrimination based on Source of Income***

We, the undersigned, are writing to express our strong support for, and request your vote to approve **HB6** and **HB357**. These identical bills will protect low-income households from housing discrimination based on the source of their income. Legislation protecting households that use housing choice vouchers has been passed in 13 other states.

In Virginia, the housing choice voucher program helps approximately **46,300 low-income households** afford decent, privately-owned housing. Across the Commonwealth, vouchers help:

* **10,500 seniors;**
* **24,600 people with disabilities, and;**
* **22,700 families with 49,300 children**

Unfortunately, it is perfectly legal, and a common practice for landlords to deny housing based on the use of a voucher. Protecting low-income families using housing choice vouchers will allow them the opportunity to move to the neighborhood of their choice, instead of discrimination relegating them to the same disinvested, high-poverty, and racially segregated neighborhoods.

We comprise a broad alliance of housing sector organizations and partners who recognize the importance of neighborhood choice and providing families with the ability to make their own decisions as to where to live. The time is now to protect these families and ensure that we are leveraging both the intent and the financial investment of the voucher program.

Prohibiting discrimination based on source of income will allow low-income households to:

* **Move to homes in better school districts**
* **Move to safer neighborhoods**
* **Break the cycle of poverty for their families**
* **Move closer to employment opportunities**

Protecting low-income families from housing discrimination will leverage the considerable public investment that we are currently making in affordable housing building a Commonwealth that is stronger, with less concentrated poverty, and more opportunities for low-income families to thrive.

Sincerely,