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PRESS RELEASE

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Court Decision Opens Doors for Maryland Families, Seniors, and People with Disabilities Using Housing Vouchers

OAG's Civil Rights Division Filed Amicus Brief Supporting Protections for Voucher Holders Under the HOME Act

BALTIMORE, MD (July 29, 2025) - On Monday, July 28, 2025, the Supreme Court of Maryland issued a decision in *Hare v. David S. Brown Enterprises, Ltd.* The Court's decision protects the fair housing rights of Marylanders under the Housing Opportunities Made Equal (HOME) Act and affirms that housing policies that disproportionately harm people who use vouchers to pay their rent are illegal.

The Supreme Court concluded that a housing provider's minimum income requirement of two and a half times the rental amount resulted in a discriminatory impact against holders of housing vouchers. The policy of the housing provider had the impact of excluding nearly 80% of people who use a voucher, despite that the voucher portion of the rent is paid directly to the landlord by the government. This is a widespread practice that undermines the anti-discrimination provisions of Maryland law. The Court's opinion reaffirms that members of marginalized groups cannot be unlawfully barred from housing because of their source of income and discriminatory minimum income requirements.

More than 200,000 Marylanders in over 101,000 households rely on federally funded housing vouchers, with thousands more using vouchers funded by the State. Most voucher holders are families with children, people with disabilities, and seniors—groups that are disproportionately affected by income-based discrimination. These programs require tenants to contribute about 30% of their income toward rent and utilities, with the balance paid directly to landlords by a government agency. Nearly 60% of non-disabled voucher holders live in households where someone works, but their earnings are still too low to afford rent without this assistance.

The Supreme Court's decision will open up housing opportunities for thousands of Maryland families, seniors, and people with disabilities. Landlords across the state have long used similar policies, creating unnecessary and illegal barriers that limit where voucher holders can live. The General Assembly enacted the HOME Act to end such practices, and this ruling ensures that the legislature's intent is fully realized.

In March, Attorney General Anthony G. Brown, through his Civil Rights Division, filed an amicus brief in the case asking the Court to protect low-income Marylanders from illegal housing discrimination and to protect the use of housing voucher programs. The Court's decision yesterday follows the arguments made in that brief and aligns with the Civil Rights Division's work to stop housing discrimination and make sure that all Marylanders have equal access to housing.

Today, the Office released the following statement on the Court's decision:

"The Office of the Attorney General applauds the Supreme Court's decision, which sends a clear message: strategies to avoid the anti-discrimination provisions of the HOME Act will not be tolerated. Marylanders who rely on vouchers should know that their vouchers do not make them any less entitled to safe and fair housing. Landlords cannot use policies like minimum income requirements to sidestep the law and discriminate against families, seniors, or people with disabilities who pay their rent with vouchers."

Any person who believes that their rights have been violated can contact the Civil Rights Division of the Office of the Attorney General ([Civil Rights Complaint Form](#)) or the Maryland Commission on Civil Rights at 410-767-8600, mccr@maryland.gov, or Online Complaint Preliminary Questionnaire (PQ).

About the OAG Civil Rights Division

On January 1, 2024, Attorney General Brown launched the Civil Rights Division of the Office of the Attorney General of Maryland. The Division was established to implement the authority given to the Attorney General by the General Assembly to enforce state, federal, and local antidiscrimination laws. This expanded authority is a first in Maryland history and allows the Office to protect Marylanders no matter their race, color, religion or creed, sex, age, ancestry or national origin, marital status, physical or mental disability, sexual orientation, or gender identity. The Civil Rights Division is staffed by a team of lawyers, investigators, and paralegals who investigate allegations of civil rights violations and pursue remedies, including changes to policies, practices, and procedures; restitution; and civil penalties. Claims brought by the Division are on behalf of the State of Maryland and address discriminatory practices that affect or impact beyond an individual claimant. The Division does not have the authority to address civil rights violations by state or local governments or agencies.

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